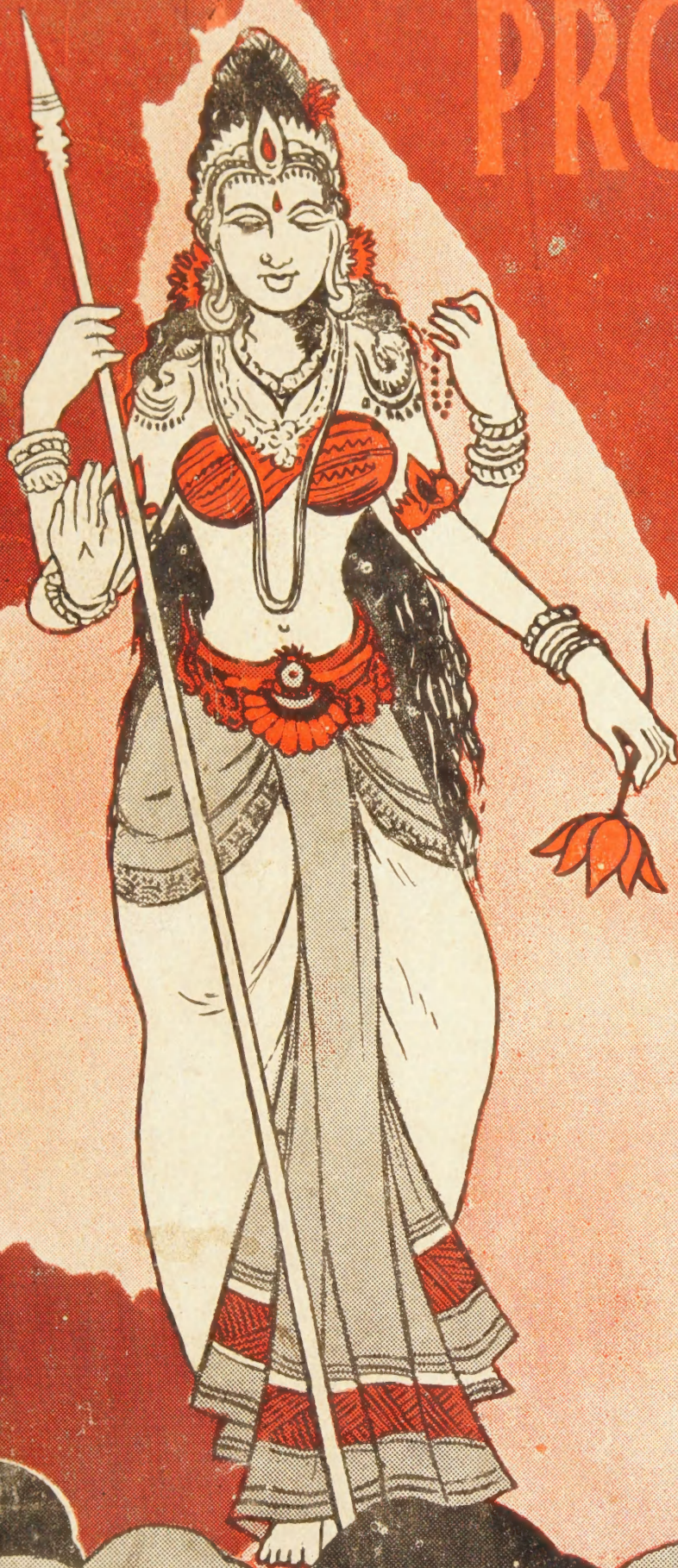


# INDIA'S LANGUAGE PROBLEM

















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# INDIA'S LANGUAGE PROBLEM

இந்தியாவின் மொழிப் பிரச்சனை  
தமிழ் மொழியின் நிலை  
தஞ்சாவூர்  
30/4/54

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# INDIA'S LANGUAGE PROBLEM

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## Table of Contents

Title of Chapters	Pages
Preface	i
Introduction	vi
Chapter I. Nationality and Language	1
„ II. The Factors of the Language Problem	12
„ III. The All India Aspect	19
„ IV. The Lessons of History	34
„ V. The Writing on the Wall	50
„ VI. A Common National Language	68
„ VII. The Case for Tamil	87
„ VIII. All India Affinities of Tamil from Linguistic and Historical Points of View	112
„ IX. The Voice of the South	130
„ X. The Case of the Separatists	149
„ XI. In Conclusion	157



## PREFACE

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*“Whatever you hear, and  
from whomsoever you hear,  
It would be wise on your part  
to see the truth underlying it” —*

### Precepts of Tiruvalluvar.

The wholesome precept of the ancient sage quoted above has become in these days a cry in the wilderness. The patience to see both sides or all sides of a question is getting rare and the courage to present the unknown, the inconvenient or the submerged truths rarer still. As such we are not in a position now to measure the influence, this booklet is likely to have in this land of ours. But we are sure that it will be a great incentive to clear thinking and a cementing force among the seemingly irreconcilable forces of thought in this wide sub-continent.

The small group of lovers of the land its language and culture, banded together under the name Tamil India Publications, have on behalf of the Saidapet Tiruvalluvar Sentamil Sivaneri Kazhagam, brought out this work as the first of a series aimed at national and popular awakening.



Navalantivu is the ancient name given to what is now the vast sub-continent of India which though at present split up by alien or comparatively alien forces into various racial, cultural, sectarian and other groups, was once the home of a cosmopolitan but homogeneous culture whose influences are still felt, though often left unnoticed, in the basic unity of culture in the land. A realisation and development of this unity, if possible, is the only door open to the peoples of this land to evolve a national or a broad-based super-national structure. It is our earnest hope that this work, as well as succeeding works of this series will help to lead the down-trodden poverty-stricken, ill-educated populace of the country to achieve in the long run the above ideal.

The work sees light at a time when the forces of disruption are so strong that those who clamour for unity are themselves unwittingly helping further disruption. The least we hope to achieve is to present to the ruling authorities the results of the thoughts of thinking men above board so far as groups of vested interests, groups and parties are concerned and glimpses into the basic truths and realities in the national and popular life which are not often quite objectively studied.



The work, we feel, is in short, a challenge to our clear thinking and sense of logic and a test of our sincerity and patriotism. We feel sure the enlightened public and the leaders of thought will give a rousing reception to our efforts.

We are offering this work to the public in memory of the late lamented heroes of Tamilnad, Talamuthu and Natarajan whose martyrdom in the cause of Tamil has been a beacon-light to all lovers of the land. Intended as it originally was, to be brought out on the Pongal Day of the Tiruvalluvar Era 1980 (18th January, 1948, which is the Tamil National festival, it is hoped that it would serve to awaken the sleeping nation to renewed activity.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the author Panmozhipulavar K. Appadurai Pillai, M.A., L.T. for cooperating with us and bringing forward to the public this rare work. His precious combination of patriotism and scholarship, his sympathetic eclecticism that seeks to unite what seem to contradict and go as under, are, we are sure, likely to prove an asset and an investment in the cause of the national language and nationalism.



We have been exceptionally fortunate in enlisting the sympathy and support of the renowned scholar of Tamilnad, Asiriyar Maraimalai Adigal (alias Swami Vedaachalam) who has kindly undertaken to go through the pages and made substantial suggestions and alterations for the betterment of the book and has also honoured us with an interesting, instructive and scholarly foreword. We tender our heartfelt gratitude to him for these noble services.

We cannot also help expressing here our appreciation of the services of Tiru Kanchi Manimozhiyar, the Manager of the "Free Printers" and to the Secretaries of the Saidapet S. S. Kazhagam for their self-denying endeavours in seeing it through the press and giving it fine presentation and shape. Nor can we omit here the timely help of Mr. V. E. Natesa Chettiar Avl. but for whose ardent and timely help this work would not have seen light of day even now after a year since it was written.

We hope and pray the public of Tamilnad as elsewhere in India may appreciate our work and encourage us to continue it with ever-increasing zeal and fervour. We also believe that for any acts of omission or commission,



the public and the scholarly world would extend to us an indulgent attitude, considering the zeal and the goodwill of those who have pioneered into this field.

Tamil India Publications.





## INTRODUCTION

By Swami Vedachalam

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The learned author of the following treatise on "India's Language Problem", and the publishers: the "Thiruvalluvar Sen Tamil Sivanerikkalagam, Saidapet" have desired me to write an introduction to this work in the hope of getting another voice to support a new subject little thought of or cared for by persons of light and leading in the present day political sphere of this great country, India. No doubt instead of letting a single man to speak for a neglected subject just like a lonely voice crying in the wilderness it is deemed wise to get another to testify to a statement which if attended to in time and carried into effect will conduce to bring welfare to many millions of people but which if treated with wilful negligence and contempt is sure to bring disruption and ruin to mankind. It is therefore that I have consented to write this prefatory note with the view of doing my duty in bringing additional light to the vital matter that concerns the lives of many millions.



## Indian Languages

Now, India is a vast continent having a population of three hundred and nineteen (319) millions in round numbers and speaking languages no less than 220 in number. The latest information obtained of the widely spoken languages is given as follows in the "Universal Encyclopædia" under the heading "India":

"The languages with the greatest number of speakers are Hindi and Bengali. The languages spoken by really large numbers of people are Kherwari of the Astro-Asiatic family, Burmese of the Tibeto-Chinese family, Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese and Telugu of the Dravidian family and Western Punjabi, Sindi, Oriá, Bengali, Hindi, E. Hindi, W. Hindi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Panjabi and Marathi of the Hindu family."

### The Need for a Common Language

Of these so many languages, which to pick up after a comparative enquiry as having the qualifications needed to be made the common language of all the people called the Indians by reason of their being resident in India either from remote ages or from mediæval or modern periods, even though they widely differ from one another in race, lan-



guage, religion, customs and manners, does not seem to have engaged the sober attention of the political leaders in India. The object of the following treatise is on that account to show the vital importance of such an enquiry based on a sound comparative investigation of languages current in India. In the ~~sixth~~ chapter of this essay the author has gone fully and minutely into a consideration of all the elements that ought to constitute the chief factors of a common language of India. By way of introduction to the same subject I may offer a few more points for the sake of emphasis.

A study of the past will greatly help us not only to understand how our present state has been shaped but it will also guide us how to mould our future. Evolution of the human mind is quite continuous in time and it is therefore unscientific to dissociate what it was in the past from what it is at present and leave the valuable aid which the study of the two might afford to steer the course of our future life to a safe station. In a matter that seriously affects the vital parts of human life no one should overlook the best remedy that is easily accessible to one and all.



## Value of a Common Speech

Just see what can be more serviceable to man than language by which he easily communicates his thoughts to another and understands what the other represents to him as his own. And likewise see also what confusion, what trouble, what puzzle and what embarrassment is occasioned when a number of persons who do not understand the speech of each other, assemble incidentally and struggle to know and make known their wants and requirements under the stress of a critical moment. Then and then only can be fully realized the supreme value and requirement of a common speech. From of old when the people of one country, advanced in civilization by means of trade, travel and learning, are brought into contact with other civilized peoples of other countries, they feel all the more keenly the necessity of having a common speech to communicate with all freely and directly.

Especially at the present time when the peoples of all the five continents have reached such a high level of culture that it brings them all to meet together and mingle their interests to an appreciable degree, is it not necessary to consider what language has the



special qualifications for being adopted as the common tongue of all? The solution of this problem becomes the more urgent, the more we direct our attention to the bewildering diversity of languages in this world, for there are 220 languages in India alone, aside of 779 languages that are being in use outside of India. Unless a common language comes to be spoken and written and cultivated, real unity among people cannot be imagined to come forth. It is, therefore, highly desirable that a serious consideration free from bias for one's own language should be given to a careful choice of the kind of language that possesses the indisputable fitness to become the common speech not only of India but of the other countries also.

### The Features of a Common Language

Now, let us see what must form the features of a language to make it fit for being used by all people living inside and outside of India. We may say first of all that it must not only be a living speech but must also have a continuous existence from the remote past up to the present. For such languages that have had no existence in the past, though they are now in use, cannot be said to reflect the uninterrupted evolution of the mind of the people who now use them.



Secondly it must have a rich literature not borrowed from other languages but must be an original creation of the people who had their own social, moral and political principles as well as intellectual and religious ideas, which may be embraced and cherished by all without a hitch.

And finally it must have been spoken commonly by all the people who lived at one centre in the primitive ages and for that vital reason it must have that supreme and beneficial qualification for being brought into use again as a common tongue.

Under these headings we can briefly discuss the question of a common speech dealt with full details by the author.

### Languages Living and Dead

In the first place it must be borne in mind that languages now spoken and cultivated as well in India as in all other countries have no literature prior to the ninth century A. D., except Tamil. But Tamil is the only living tongue that received its cultivation more than 5000 years ago and possesses a living, unbroken and intimate connection from its literature of the distant past with that of the living present.



All other cultivated languages of the ancient world such as the Egyptian, the Balylonian and the Chaldean, the Aryan, the Greek and the Latin, the Mexican and the Peruvian died out long, long ago losing all connection and continuation with the present age. Any attempt to revive any of them for popular use is vain, and money, time and labour spent for it is mis-spent, when to obtain a tangible benefit is near at hand by making a judicious use of them in spreading the already attained and still living culture of Tamil all over the World.

No doubt Sanskrit has an antique past; but it ceased to be in use among the people even in such a distant period as the sixth century B C., for we find the Buddha preaching then to the people not in Sanskrit but in the Pali and the Ardhamagadhi languages. According to Barth, Sanskrit was never a spoken tongue but a priestly language invented by the priests for the purpose of conducting rites and ceremonies and sacrifices. Further, its phonetics is extremely artificial and its syntax is much more so that it can never be learnt without considerable effort and training which the people cannot be expected to undergo.



## Hindi Cannot be a Common Language

Again, in view of the large number of people by whom Hindi is spoken at present, a strong plea is being put forward to adopt it as the common language of India. It does not seem to be a sound judgment to take numbers alone into account in such a vital matter. The number of people living in a spacious country may at one time increase enormously and at another time decrease to a surprisingly low fraction. Is it not a palpable fact that war and disease, volcanic eruptions and famines as unforeseen occurrences have tended to diminish the number of people to the lowest degree? At one time the plague in England and at another time the same in India devastated some of the densely populated parts of the two countries, so much so that the population of those parts was almost reduced to a zero point. Have not the terrible European wars that reaged after 1914 and 1939 annihilated the lives of untold millions? Not to say the magnificent towns and vast countries that were razed to the ground and sunk into water by volcanic eruptions, do not such vicissitudes of life tell against the futile argument for a common language to be based solely upon the large number of people speaking it at one time?



Further, look into the fortunes of the English language. Before the time of Queen Elizabeth, that is, three hundred years ago it was not such a refined language as it is now, nor it had regular grammar, being spoken hardly by a few millions of people confined to a little island, England. But see now, how great a refinement and polish it has attained so as to rival even Tamil—the Tamil which had preceded it by 5000 years in all its beauty, accuracy of grammar and brilliant rhetoric, and had been spoken in antiquity all over the world by countless millions of civilized people and even now being spoken by thirty millions of people living mainly in South India and Ceylon exclusive of those found everywhere in the world as trading and industrial colonies.

Moreover, Hindi is not a single language uniformly spoken in the North and the name 'is more often employed as a vague term to denote all the rural dialects of the three languages—Bihari, Eastern Hindi and Western Hindi spoken between Bengal proper and the Punjab.' (The Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol. I page 364). And the number of people who speak Bihari is 34 millions, those who speak Eastern Hindi are 22 millions



and those who use Western Hindi are 40 millions. These being three distinct languages those who speak the one do not understand the other. It is quite wrong to call the three different languages, "Hindi," as if they were one. The object of calling the three by one name may be to exaggerate the prevalence of a single dialect and mislead the people to adopt it as a common tongue.

**Hindi is only 300 years old and is Poor**

Further Hindi is poor in original literature; some of its epics like the mythical Ramayana, being mere translations from Sanskrit epics and legends which in no way improve the understanding of the people but deplorably hamper freedom of thought and unbiassed enquiry. And a still another defect of Hindi is that it cannot stand independently of Sanskrit, its words and phrases being taken mostly from Sanskrit. From these facts it must be clear to all sensible persons that neither the study of Hindi nor the study of its much vaunted parent Sanskrit can serve to bring either earthly or heavenly benefit to people at large.



## Tamil is a very Ancient Tongue and Rich in Rare Original Works

As shown above, neither Hindi nor any other language of India, and I make bold to say that except Tamil, not even the most cultivated language of the modern world as French can aspire to rise to the elevated position of unifying all the people of the whole world into one such family as would speak one language and would worship one almighty God, the father of the universe. Well, why do we make an exception in the case of the Tamil language alone? Simply because Tamil alone possesses literatures that have been produced from 5000 B. C. up to the present, Since 5000 B.C. violent changes in the physical and mental, social and religious lives of the people have occurred periodically and continuously in the vast Tamilian continent, but the Tamil people by providential care have with their land, language and remnants of literature and religion survived the catastrophes that had overtaken them all through the varying ages and their own existence in them. The Tamil literary works produced before the tenth century A. D. are quite original and are enriched with the treasures of natural ideas and pure thoughts



and noble sentiments concerning not only objects of nature and of undeveloped and developed minds but also of the relation of human beings in contact and conflict with one another and with the lower animal kingdom. And last but not least deeply and closely argued conclusions about the course and end of this earthly life and of the life to come in an invisible world under the guidance of superior intelligences are enshrined in its classics.

### **Broad Mindedness of Tamil Poets and Saints**

Now the two primary feelings which lead people to shape their lives and fulfil the purpose of creation are love and hate. Life begins in love but hate comes in its wake to kill it ; yet another element of supreme value makes its appearance between the two and helps to perpetuate love and life by uprooting hate. The principle performing this function is called reason which manifests itself in different degrees in all the living beings from the lowest amoeba to the highest man. In the early ages when the detached portions of human society who migrated from their central home to distant parts had been ignorant of the knowledge of the human mind though in practice they too were impelled to.



it unconsciously out of necessity, the ancient Tamils alone made a penetrating study of this vital matter as is clear from "Tholkappiam" the ancient Tamil grammar and rhetoric. They had a clear comprehension of the great fact that by loving one another human beings were brought together so as to have interchange of thought and find out ways and means to increase their happiness and keep it clear of the touch of evil and misery. They tried their utmost to ward off hate among them. Their poets, thinkers and teachers repeatedly sang and taught 2000 years ago :

" All places are ours, all are our kith and kin,

Good and evil befall not caused by others,

Pain and relief are brought likewise not by others,

Dying is not new, nor living gave us joy."

—(Puram 192)

Saint Thiruvalluvar who existed in the first century B. C. likewise taught :

" All human beings are alike by reason of birth but unlike by reason of their calling "



“ He who cuts off vanity which avers ‘ I ’ and ‘ mine ’ will go into the realm which is too far away for the Gods to obtain.”

Such noble ideas pervade and diffuse themselves all through the ancient Tamil literature and even in its modern ethical works not swayed by the influence of Sanskrit writers, one cannot fail to meet with such broad moral teachings at every turn in them. So far as my knowledge is concerned, I venture to say that I could find no such broad and all-embracing moral principles inculcated in any other ancient literature of any other language which has not come under the influence of the Tamil sages. Even the authors of the Buddhist and Jain works belonged to the Tamilian stock and as such most of their moral maxims were not in discord with those of the ancient Tamil Poets and Saints. For a detailed treatment of this point my work on, “ The Life and Times of St. Manickavachakar,” may be referred to.

At the present political crisis when every people in every part of India not only looks every other people in every other part with disdain, contempt and hatred, thinking that they alone as a distinct race have the privilege to possess a certain tract of land but



also strive to live in isolation of all others with whom they have all along lived in close companionship. It is this isolation, this selfish motive that causes discord, that embitters the feelings of our fellow countrymen who all alike form the beloved children of one all-merciful God. By such mental attitude the stern fact that our own life is not really our own but a transient one brought by a supreme intelligence to occupy a tiny spot of an already existing piece of land for a tiny period of time is sadly lost sight of and wreck after wreck and ruin after ruin are brought on as its inevitable consequence. Not even a bit of our hair nor even a particle of this material world can be created by a finite and imperfect being just as we are: why then do you carry on this fruitless and horrible struggle on account of this false view of life and forget God and humanity? Spread the teachings of ancient Tamil classics among all people by spreading the culture of Tamil, which can be done more easily and inexpensively, with less labour and less space of time than you can do in the case of any other language, and by this means alone you can put an end to all such vain struggles for all time to come. I am glad to note the author of the following treatise has treated this subject pointedly and forcibly.



## The Religion of the Tamils as common to all

Now, as regards "religion" which forms the mainstay of the human mind, since it ever hankers after an Almighty Being who can conduct him unscathed through the ordeals of his life, and land him safely on the other side which opens out to receive him and set him in everlasting happiness, we may say the ancient Tamils, especially their great thinkers, discovered the open secret about God and the ways and means to attain him. What they discovered to be God being acceptable to all, had been worshipped by all, all throughout the world, without any difference in any way. This led all the people in antiquity to live peacefully, making no room whatever for splitting them up into multifarious sects and driving them to war with each other and shed oceans of their blood in the name of religion. Religion then formed the common ground for intimate union and mutual help. They all worshipped the same symbol of God from the very eastern extremity of this globe to the western. So there was no clash between the cherished belief of one sect and that of the other. Strictly speaking there was no sect at all among the ancient people.



Well, what was that ancient and common symbol of God which was the single object of worship among all people in the prehistoric as well as in the historic ages? Here Archæology comes to our aid to give a definite answer to this vital question. Let me quote what Mr. Westroppe has written on this point.

### Linga worship

“The practice of ‘linga worship’ was so general as to have spread itself over a large part of the habitable globe. for it flourished for many ages in Egypt and Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, it still is in vigour in India and many parts of Africa and was even found in America on its discovery by the Spaniards, being regarded as the most sacred object of worship and consecrated by religion. The culture was associated with every idea and sentiment which was regarded as ennobling to man.”

From this true and unbiassed statement of a European research scholar, the fact is brought home to our mind that in ancient times all the people who lived in the habitable parts of this earth worshipped only one symbol of God which in later ages is called “Siva Linga.” Now, the form of this symbol



shaped either in stone or in wood or in any brick-work looks like unto a cone set in the middle of a circular object. In other words, the combination of a circle and a line constitutes the form of the Siva Linga. In India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas one can meet with in every nook and corner and in illustrious cities such as Rameswaram, Madura and Chidambaram in the South, and Benares, Vaidyanath, Darjeeling and others in the North, innumerable Siva temples in the central shrine of which this cone-shaped figure, Siva Linga, is set up and worshipped daily by millions of people.

Why such a queer shaped figure as Siva Linga should have been chosen by all the people all over the world for the worship of God, cannot fail to strike the mind of a thinking man and prompt him to seek the real meaning of it. And many who reflected upon it came to hold the view that it represented the union of the male and female generative organs which symbolize the productive function of God. Though such an account may appeal to certain minds as explaining the meaning of "Siva Linga," yet, why, of the many functions, the creative function alone of God, should have been



sought by the whole mankind as the object of worship in preference to the worship of God himself, remains a riddle, in that account bringing no satisfaction to a deep-thinking mind. This difficulty set me thinking over the matter in all its aspects and in all its relations to the rites and ceremonies that are being conducted in the Siva temples, so that I came to hit upon a clue to the real meaning of it when I observed the rite in which the temple fire was kindled while the cone shaped linga was being set up in the central pit of a circular stone and at the end of the ritual, ashes were distributed to the worshippers. Then it struck me that the intimate relation of ashes to the cult could not have signified anything but the worship of fire transferred to a cone-shaped object which resembles flame while it burns tapering up to a point in the form of a cone. In many ancient temples fire was kindled night and day and the light was never allowed to go out even for a second; and this custom still prevails in all the celebrated Siva temples as well as in the Parsi sanctuaries where this is observed with particular care (See J. G. Frazer).



## Siva Linga is Light Symbol

As time went on special persons to look after the kindling of fire night and day came to be appointed and these persons became priests and priestesses acquiring in course of time great sanctity so as to be looked upon by the worshippers as the deputies of God. What these sacred persons did and said became also the very deeds and words of God. Taking advantage of this faith of the people, the priests began to devise a means of putting a stop to the very troublesome office of kindling fire night and day and substituting in its place a stone or wood made in the form of burning fire. In this way came the worship of Siva Linga which is but the form of fire transferred to a cone-shaped stone or any other object like it.

## Light is God

To the intuitive mind of the primitive people light appeared as the Supreme Being that creates and sustains man and the universe. From the time of his birth until he passes away from this world man finds himself helpless and to depend upon others for the maintenance of his life. And at times when even the help of his fellow begins



cannot avail to avert the dangers that are being brought on by a tempest, lightning and thunder, fire, flood, and earthquake, man naturally seeks the help of a Being who is self-existent, self-reliant and self-determining intelligence. He sees darkness depressing his spirits and light enlivening them. In the light he sees ways and means to live, but in the darkness he notes mere cessation of all his activities and blindness of both his physical and mental vision. Though the daily contact of modern man with light and fire has dulled his sensibility to feel the supreme quality of light, yet the fresh and untainted understanding of the primitive man comprehended in full the presence of God in light. And therefore it is that all the people from prehistoric ages felt the necessity of offering their prayers for protection and subsistence to the great luminary, the sun. Before the discovery of fire, man worshipped not only the sun but also such light giving orbs as the moon and the stars. Gradually as he learnt to make fire and put it to meet his several needs, he came to look upon fire as the deity which was nearer to him than the sun and which served him in many ways to live safely and happily. What can be more serviceable to him than fire which gave him heat



and light receiving nothing from him in return but possessing in itself all the bounty unobtainable elsewhere? Is it unreasonable to suppose then that fire itself is God or the vehicle of God for manifesting himself to man?

From of yore the Tamilian forefathers had been staunch believers in the existence of God in fire and light and never swerved from it so as to give their faith to any deified human being or animal. That their supreme monotheistic faith has not faded in its pristine splendour even after five thousand years, when it had to come in touch with the polytheistic and anthropomorphic cult of the Aryan people may clearly be seen in every Siva temple all over India, in the central shrine of which the light symbol Siva Linga alone is set up and worshipped, while the later-introduced human and animal shaped images are relegated to subordinate places surrounding the central shrine.

Further, in order to instruct the masses that light alone and not any other object constitutes God, a blazing conflagration of fire is exhibited every year in the grand Karthikai festival at the Siva temple at Thiruvannamalai in South India in the middle of



December. So far it is plain that the Tamilians as a whole have been worshipping light from time immemorial up to the present, either as God or as the form of God and that Siva Linga remains the only symbol consecrated for more than ten thousand years as representing the pure luminous form of God. European scholars such as Grant, Allen, Westroppe, E. B. Tylor and others have shown in their laborious works the prevalence of Siva Linga worship all over the world from primitive times up to our own. For further information their works may be studied with advantage

If the people of the whole world will continue to adhere to this wise and ancient cult of Siva Linga, all the religious differences, sectarian wrangles, and religious crusade will be quelled and they will all unite into one brotherhood to pay their adoration to then one Heavenly Father who is all light and love. In all the ten thousand and more sacred hymns sung in Tamil by the holy Saiva Saints nothing but the monotheistic worship of this light symbol Siva Linga is inculcated. And in recent times St. Ramalinga finding the masses to forget that God is light and human and animal figures as if they were the real God,



instituted in the sanctuary he caused to be built for the set purpose of assembling all religionists to worship God only in the form of light to the exclusion of all stone and other material images.

Let us all, therefore, take this wise lesson from our ancient Tamilian forefathers and join together to pay our adoration to the almighty God who is near to us everywhere in the pure and resplendent form of light and cast aside all difference of caste, creed and colour.

Having said so much for observing one religion common to all mankind, let us turn our attention to language to discover which, of all the existing tongues, can serve to bring into intimate and indissoluble bond not only all the people of India but of the whole world. For next to religion, language alone constitutes the basic principle of all human relations intimate and ever-lasting.

### **The Original Home of Man was the Tamil Land**

From the time I read the ancient Tamil classics I came to have a dim notion that the present Tamil country in the South of India could not have been more than a remnant of a vast continent now sunk in the Indian



Ocean. In the prefatory poem appended to the very ancient Tamil grammar and rhetoric the "Tholkappiam" (which is nearly 5000 years old) it is expressly stated that the composition of that great work took place when 'Kumari Nadu', the vast southern continent, was in existence. And in the sublime epic Tamil poem the Silappadikaram which was composed in the second century A. D the same fact is stated with some more details, by means of which we come to know that that continent contained a mountain range called 'Kumarikkodu' and a river called 'Pahruli" which watered some forty-nine provinces into which the habitable parts of which had been divided and the extent of which is mentioned to have been 700 kavatham.

Whether the calculated extent was in breadth or length or in square, whether a kavatham meant two miles or ten miles, we have no means to determine. Still from what is stated in the text and commentary of the great Tamil epic, it is quite clear that the submerged continent must have been a very large one at any rate. Possessed with this idea of a submerged continent in the south, I was kindled with a strong desire to know



whether this could be proved by the sciences of geology and Physical Geography, Biology and Ethnology and began in my nineteenth year to apply myself to a careful study of authoritative works on these sciences. In the course of my study I happened to read the very interesting and profoundly scientific work entitled "History of Creation" written by the eminent biologist Ernst Heckel. In this great work I came across the portion dealing with this vast continent as the cradle of human race and I quote his very words below :

This large continent of former times Scalater, an English man, has called 'Lemuria' from the monkeylike animals which inhabited it, and it is at the same time of great importance from being the probable cradle of the human race" (Vol I 1876, Pp. 360-361)

"There are a number of circumstances (especially chronological) which suggest that the primeval home of man was a continent now sunk below the surface of the Indian Ocean which extended along the South of Asia, as it is at present (and probably in direct connection with it) towards the east, as far as further India and the Sunda Islands,

:



towards the west as far as Madagascar and the south-eastern shores of Africa." Vol. II 1876, Pp. 325-326).

These statements of a famous scientist, furnishing as it does indisputable evidence to substantiate what was mentioned in the ancient Tamil Classics as regards the prior existence of a great southern continent, further impelled me to pursue my studies in this respect to see whether any other scientists have investigated this point and said anything for or against it. It gives me great satisfaction to find such able and illustrious scientists as Alfred Russel Wallace, Thomas Huxley, H. F. Blanford, Lord Avebury and H. G. Wells have dealt with it in greater detail so as to corroborate what Heckel stated concerning the pre-existence of the vast Southern continent as the primeval home of man. If any additional evidence be required to prove that vital fact from modern day science, the very recent utterance of a living scientist as H. G. Wells would afford it. In the "Outline of History" he says :—

"Man was fully man when he entered America. The old world was the nursery of the sub-races of mankind. Some where between South Africa and the East Indies and the



Mediterranean these sub-races worked out their destinies, as lands rose and sank, and forests gave place to desert and desert to forest. It may have been where now the Indian Ocean extends" (Fifth revision, 1930.)

### The Original Tongue of Man was Tamil

Now, it is manifest that scientists are unanimous in holding that the submerged continent called Kumari Nadu by the ancient Tamils and Lemuria by the modern scientists, constituted the only primeval home of man when he first made his appearance on this globe. This extensive region in which the equator lies was watered by two large streams called Kumari and Pahruli and rendered possible the existence of man by the fertility of its soil and temperate climate and by the abundant products of luscious fruits, edible roots and plants. The language spoken there by the first man was Tamil, since there is no reference to this continent in any other literature than that of Tamil. A great Tamil work was composed for commemorating the expedition and exploits of the monarch 'Sengon who ruled in that great land and, though it was unfortunately lost, yet a few verses of it with commentary recently discovered, conclusively prove that the language spoken and cultivated



by its inhabitants, archaic though it was in some respects, is not wholly different from the Tamil of subsequent ages, nor is it incomprehensible as the vedic language is to one acquainted with the later Sanscrit. The people who spoke Tamil at that remote age must have been at the stage of childhood, that is, what a child of six or seven years old is in, when the vocal organs are not being trained to pronounce artificial sounds with effort. The child utters only those words and syllables that come to it naturally and easily. All those artificial vowel and consonantal sounds found in other languages are entirely absent in Tamil. This is one vital reason why most of the ancient languages that had artificial and unnatural vowels and consonants to pronounce have ceased to be used popularly, whereas Tamil alone which has none of such hard consonants, sibilants and aspirates has continued to live in all its vigour even after fifteen or twenty thousand years from its beginnings. Further, in Tamil no consonantal sound can stand at the beginning of a word without combining with a vowel; for instance, the word 'Christ' should not be pronounced in Tamil as it is in English, but should be changed into 'Kirithu' according to the phonetic law in



Tamil. I was long thinking why this and other such changes of foreign words should be made necessary as they come to be used in Tamil, when I happened to have an occasion to observe the natural law that led to such change. While I was on a visit to a European gentleman, I saw some children playing in his compound. They were all between six and seven years old and being all of English extraction had little acquaintance with any Tamil children and spoke English only. In conversing with each other one pronounced the word 'Christ' not in the English fashion but as 'Kirithu'. This natural pronunciation of a nature's child impressed me so strongly that ever since that time I interested myself by attending diligently to the manner by which foreign words are pronounced by the children, women and unlettered men of Tamilian stock in their natural state and was struck by the invariable Tamil fashion with which foreign words are uttered by them. It is his natural phenomenon of the human speech exhibited in the incipient stage of its formation that has preserved Tamil as a living language even after an immensely long period of twenty thousand years whereas a series of many hundred



languages came into existence as well as went out of existence in a few decades. From what we have learnt from such linguistic appearance and disappearance of countless tongues that had occurred in the long past, we may safely predict that Tamil alone being the natural outcome of human needs, when the human beings were in the natural stage of children beginning to express their wants in simple sounds which in course of time came to form words and phrases, will live as long as man will live, while all other languages being of an artificial character will pass away in due time. I desist from dwelling on this point further on, since the author of the following treatise has recounted in a clear and succinct manner almost all the merits which Tamil possesses for being made the common language not only of India but of the whole world.

### **The Southern Submerged Continent The Birth Place of Man and Tamil**

As shown above the southern submerged continent "Kumari Nadu" or 'Lemuria' forming as it does the first dwelling place of the human beings and the language first spoken by them being Tamil only, it becomes now easy for us to explain how so much



diversity in race and language as is seen at present have come to prevail all over this globe. When this great continent existed, all the northern parts of India including the Himalayan section was covered by the Rajaputana sea; but owing to some natural cataclysm that often occurs in this physical world, the Rajaputana sea happened ages ago to be dried up by such an upheaval of its bed as to cause its waters to flood the south swallowing up portions of great extent of this Lemurian continent once, twice and thrice as is mentioned in the ancient Tamil classics "Tholkappiam," 'Kalithokai' and 'Silappadhikaram'. It was at that terrible occurrence that there came the urgent need for the human beings who all along lived as one indivisible family, to be split up into many groups and migrate in haste in different directions to places of safety in the north, east, and west. Those who went to the farthest corners lived out of all touch with their original brethren of the Tamil land and fared civilized or uncivilized as the nature of the soil, climate and surroundings tended to influence them.

The civilized tribes possessing here and there among them intelligent persons who took interest in learning the history of their



forefathers, had entreated them to recite for their entertainment the accounts of their original home and how they came to leave it and migrate to their new dwelling places and in response to their entreaties their bards who mostly depended on them for their livelihood took up the theme of their history and produced epic poems to be sung or recited on festive occasions and other national rejoicings. In this way arose the composition of epic and dramatic poems among civilized races who, as time went on, however changed in their speech, customs and manners, still retained a greater or less quantity not only of the words of their forefathers' speech, but also their customs and manners as the condition of their culture necessitated. As the whole of human beings were one individual unit so long as they lived in the great southern continent 'Kumari Nadu', they could not completely forget their original relationship even after their unfortunate and unforeseen separation into innumerable groups and sections. As has been shown by Dr. Caldwell in his monumental, and profoundly philological work; "A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages," the words and phrases of the Tamil language can be seen infixed



and inwoven in the ancient and prehistoric linguistic fabric of all cultured languages all over the world. As all the multitudinous languages came into being after the one great human family who spoke only one language, Tamil, quitted its original home and dispersed into various parts of the globe and settled down there, the dispersed groups naturally carried with them their Tamil speech. Except among those who sedulously cultivate their language by producing literary and religious compositions in them, phonetic decay, as illustratively proved by professors Max Muller and Sayce, affects the languages of others and change them to such an extent as to efface completely all traces of their relationship to the parent speech. But in the cultivated languages, even when they have undergone changes to an inordinate degree as in the case of the Aryan and Semetic families of languages, a careful student of this branch of study cannot fail to detect the elusive existence of Tamilian elements. But Tamil, being the language prior to the formation of all other languages no words or phrases of these others, can be so detected in the ancient Tamil poetry of the pre-Buddhistic times. Although the an-



cient Tamil grammar the Tholkappiam admits the use of some Aryan words in the Tamil literary compositions, they are far from being the original elements in its structure. It is even doubtful whether they are really Aryan, since the Aryan tongue itself evolved from Tamil after its separation from its primitive home. On the other hand, as shown by Dr. Caldwell, a large number of pure primitive Tamil words are found interspersed in the old vedic dialect of the Aryan people. Does not this alone constitute the significant proof for establishing the fact that Tamil only stands as the parent speech of all tongues which came into existence all over the world after the submergence of the great southern continent "Kumari Nadu" or Lemuria?

### Summary and concluding remarks

So far our observations based on evidence afforded by the ancient Tamil classics and modern Western Science lead us to conclude that the first appearance of man on this globe took place in the vast southern continent that lay on the two sides of the equator, the greater portion of it stretching southwards as far as the South Pole and towards east and west as far as Australia and even farther and as far as South Africa; that the language



spoken by the first man was Tamil; and that the religion he professed was either the worship of Light itself as God or the vehicle of God; that when the submergence of the southern part of this great land occurred the one great human family that lived there dispersed in different directions going to the north, north-east and north-west and some groups settling in places suitable for civilized life and others in parts not conducive to such life; that it is this dispersion of the original human family into different groups and into different situations that accounts for the immense variety which at present prevails in the human features, speeches, customs and manners; and that notwithstanding this variety certain original elements of the Tamilian life and Tamilian speech have left their indelible prints in it to show their primitive Unity to a discerning intelligence.

Now, in order to resuscitate the much needed primitive unity among the existing variety of humanity, their language and their religion, nothing can serve better than to spread the culture of their original and still living language Tamil and their religion which consists in worshipping Light alone as God and bringing light to all who are immersed in intellectual darkness.

Let this grand, magnificent and unifying truth of the Tamilian faith be brought home to our leaders and rulers who do not seem to possess even a hundredth part of the knowledge of Tamil which the western scholars like Abbe Dubois, Dr. Caldwell, Dr. G. U. Pope, Professor Max Muller and others possessed. I hope the following work by Mr. K. Appadurai Pillai would furnish the key to solve the much disputed language problem not only of India but of the whole world and reinstate the study of Tamil among all people so as to bring them all together to live as one brotherhood as in the primitive times and spend their days in peace and happiness.

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# India's Language Problem

## Nationality and Language

India is a land of many languages and hence naturally her language problem is one of the toughest. Her politicians have hitherto paid little attention to it, being preoccupied with seemingly more pressing affairs, but now that the first step in the political emancipation of the land is over, it is high time a solution of it should be sought.

India at the cross-roads

For the past four or five hundred years Europe and the West have loomed large in the horizon of world-politics. India and the East have contented themselves with playing second fiddle to the all-conquering West. But the twentieth century with its two great world wars has witnessed a slow but steady awakening of the East. India bids fair to take a leading part in this awakening. She has, even before the achievement of freedom, become an all absorbing problem to the world which cannot be ignored.

At the same time India is also becoming a problem unto herself. She has one step lingering in the house of slavery to which she has long been accustomed while she has the

other directed towards the staircase leading to the glittering hall of freedom. With one eye turned towards the feudal traditions of her long mediaeval night, she has the other intermittently cast on the charming ideals of democracy and nationalism. Her hesitation to grasp at the one or to drop the other has cost her a great deal already; delaying tactics in coming to a quick decision cannot last longer without serious re-actions.

India's problems are indeed many; but to put them in a nutshell, it may be said she has not yet achieved her unity.

Forces of Union and  
Disruption

Her claim to be considered a nation has been questioned first by disinterested or interested scholars but ultimately by a section or sections of her own people. What unity or what centripetal forces she has had, have proved feeble before the disruptive or centrifugal forces long dormant in her. The land is already politically divided into two dominions, and even after this division peace and unity appear to be a mere cry in the wilderness. A failure to grapple with the problem of these disruptive forces have cost India dear; it cannot be gainsaid that continued indifference to this aspect of the question will have the most serious consequences.



Political schools must by now be divided between the Unionists or One-Nation-Theorists and the Separatists or Two-or-More-Nation-Theorists. We do not propose to take sides and argue the pros and cons between the divergent views of these sections. All that we aim at is to study the causes of disruption and find the best way to reach a solution for them as impartially as we can.

Nation and nationality, even in the West are terms of very modern significance. Of old they were loosely used to signify a tribe, a people belonging to a broad-based cultural unit or lastly to a regional group occupying a country. But the spirit of nationalism that breathed through the Western World in the 19th Century has given to the terms newer, if undefined, significances.

Nation and Nationality

The term 'nation' is now applied to the people of a country who feel that they are organically one unit, prepared to stand or fall as one body. This means (1) that the members of a nation must feel their interests to be different from those of every other group; (2) that they must merge their individual or sectional interests in the

common welfare and lastly (3) that, where interests clash, every one or every section concerned should be spontaneously ready to sacrifice their own good for the higher common interest.

Even in the West, nationalism is threatened when class or race or other interests dominate the arena of politics. This shows that if every section is ready to put forth its viewpoint, the responsibility of the stronger to yield to the weaker is very great. Where the weakest link is not cared for, the strength of the chain must suffer. The voice of the 'Big Brother' has often taken the place of the national voice in India as elsewhere. However, in a land of multifarious differences and inequalities, it is perhaps more essential than anywhere else that the voice of the weakest brother should be heeded—we may even say that the least audible voice should be listened to with particular attention. Else, the dream of nationality may still continue to be a dream.

The fundamental unity of India is often lost in the maze of her differences. Her regional diversities, the range of her climatic conditions and other environments are almost



on a continental scale. Religious, cultural and linguistic differences exceed even those of a normal continent like Europe. Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that the sense of unity is often lost sight of. Indeed the Separatists go the length of denying it outright. Whatever may be the logical or psychological reasons underlying such denial, their opponents, the Unionists, have not helped to bring about a conversion on their part or even a compromise with them. Their throwing abuse and invectives, their dubbing the Separatists as anti-nationalists, sycophants or the like, have but accentuated the differences. If the differences are logical, logic could meet them; if psychological, a psychological approach may be necessary. If they are natural effects of circumstances, a deeper and more impartial study of them alone could solve them.

Separatists logically put forward pleas of different nationality on the basis of religion or race. But logic may move the scholar alone and not the masses. If the masses are affected, as is certainly the case, it must either be due to a clash of interests or of culture which lies at the back of that logic and gives psychological force to it. Racial

feeling need not necessarily stand in the way of nationalism. It does so only where the interests of the people defined by the race-concept clash with those of others. Such clashes can be met not by political faction or bickering, but by a study of the forces at work and of the historical developments leading up to them.

Religion and race loom large in the logical presentation of the case for the Separatists. But there is a phenomenon scarcely less important and hardly less far-reaching than these—viz. that of language. Disruptive forces in this arena have not so far expressed themselves loudly, with the exception, of course, of the voices of the Sindhis, the Oriyas (Utkalasi) and the Telugus (Andhras); but they are making themselves felt slowly and steadily.

The Language  
Problem

The policy of least resistance common to all weaker organisms has led the politicians of the day to treat the language question as of subordinate, if not, negligible importance. The loudest demand has had its say and is naturally rewarded. In nature however, the loudest cry is not always the expression of the most vital need. It may even be said that the Unionists have lost their best opportunity of winning their case through throwing the



demands of the linguistic groups into the background. For, among all the agitations for division, it alone has the supreme and sole merit of subordinating its demands to those of the country as a whole. An early division of the land into linguistic units might really have prevented the other disruptive forces which are admittedly less palatable to the Unionists.

If the Unionists meant to do justice unto themselves and to their ideals they could not have done better than yielding, nay, even encouraging the division of the land into linguistic units. The political sagacity of one of the Fathers of Modern India namely, Desabandhu C. R. Das foresaw this as early as the 'twenties, when he proclaimed that the formation of linguistic provinces should constitute the policy of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi also approved of the goal and the Indian National Congress has adopted it as its creed from 1922 onwards. And yet with the exception of the British-sponsored division of Sindh and Orissa, the linguistic formation of the provinces is yet to be. The loudest linguistic group of people, the Andhras, has to remain satisfied even after the advent

of the National Government of the Dominion with an assurance from the High Command that its case will be given 'priority in an undefined period of the future.' If the loudest crier gets this assurance, the less expressive, but none the less deeply felt demand of the Tamils and other groups may have to wait indeed unsatisfied indefinitely for a 'considerable part of eternity.'

Preoccupation with immediate and urgent problems is often offered as an apology for the indefinite delay in satisfy-

Delaying tactics in  
the formation of the  
Linguistic Provinces

ing the demand for the Linguistic Provinces. But one cannot forget that those immediate problems themselves are the effects of a more fundamental division. That division, it may be said, was thrust upon the Unionists against their wishes. It is however scarcely realised that they were forced upon them mainly because they sought to by-pass the language question or mishandle it. At any rate what was done in the name of religion before the achievement of freedom and in the teeth of the opposition from freedom-lovers, may unquestionably be carried more easily after achieving freedom and in the interests of large sections of the nationalists themselves!

Delay in making a reasonable division on the basis of the language has borne untoward



results in North India. Are we sure that mismanagement of the problem in the South also may not lead to the repetition of the same results?

The Unionists' failure to realise the importance of the language problem is due to the misconceptions prevailing with regard to the elements constituting nationality. Language the fundamental factor in nationality A sense of common interest may prevail for a time and during ordinary occasions through geographical circumstances, economic interest or common administration. But these factors often break down in course of time and can certainly not stand the test of critical times. One may even say that these three factors are but accidental to nationality, or are at best catalytic agents; for the world furnishes at least one supreme instance of a nationality with every one of these three items conspicuous by its absence. The Jews have now neither a common regional homeland nor common economic interest nor a common administrative authority, but yet they are a nation among nations on the basis of a strong racial instinct, strong tradition and a strong attachment to a racial and cultural language.

Those that seek to make too much of the geographical unity of India or talk of common economic or other interests or administrative unity under British rule forget that these are but accidents adding to nationality and not factors indispensable to it. The vital traits of nationality are a common tradition, language and literature and a common cultural heritage. If India is a nation, it must be on the basis of these. If India is to become a strong nation, it must also be on these lines. It need not be hardly emphasised that of these three items, language forms the central and binding force; for the common tradition is expressed in language and literature, while literature itself is expressed in terms of language. Language is also the best safeguard in maintaining the cultural heritage as it best expresses the thought-concepts of the past in its own thought-frames and idioms.

England became a nation only after the disappearance of the domination of other languages over her, however meritorious or cultivated those languages were. The development of nationality was delayed in France, Germany and Italy till very late in their history mainly because of their political



contacts with groups talking other languages. Further even the glorious days of French or German literature were not, as one may expect, the heyday of their nationality. For so long as French was the language of the ruling race in England and the lingua franca of the West, France suffered; since the language could not be truly or exclusively a national language. The same was true of German literature so long as it was international in its appeal.

If the full import of the above lessons of history is to be realised in India, it would mean that Indian nationality should be achieved only on the basis of language; and that as there are many languages in the land, India can hope to develop her nationality on a wide basis only by allowing national units to thrive under her on the basis of language.

Indian Politicians &  
Language

Though neither the Unionists nor the Separatists generally realise the importance of the languages of the land, there does not seem to be any fundamental divergence in their approach to this problem. This is all the more welcome when it is recognised that on every other aspect of life, these groups have but agreed to eternally disagree with

each other. Despite this golden gleam of unity, the language question is unfortunately not seriously taken up by either group. In this strange land, nothing is so strange as this, that while every theory and sub-theory of nationality should parade the grounds, the fundamental principle of nationality should be slurred over by every group!

The formation of linguistic provinces is not however the only aspect of the language problem. It but touches its fringe. The linguistic provinces can give life to the nationalities of the land. But if India is to become a super-nation or a broad-based complex type of nation, as the Unionists doubtless wish, it has a still higher and harder problem to solve, namely the common language problem. We shall study this aspect in its essence in the ensuing pages.

## II THE FACTORS OF THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

The "Nationalists", as the Unionists call themselves appear to fight shy of the problem of linguistic provinces not because they are averse to it, but because they feel it would bring to the forefront of the public view the major

Confusions of terms  
in use



language problem of the land with which it is indissolubly bound. Those who are clamorous in the cause of linguistic provinces would do well to give a lead to this aspect also.

The leaders of the land are as yet not only undecided with regard to the All-India problem of language, but are also keenly divided among themselves with regard to the exact goal to be aimed at and the precise methods by means of which the goal is to be reached. There is also a great confusion of thought among the laymen and even among the learned, engendered by terms used in this country in a language (we mean English) the associations of which have immediate applications to lands fundamentally different from India. Hence we shall begin by defining the terms now in vogue in the context of facts obtaining in India.

In England and in most of the countries of the West the terms mother tongue, regional language, national language and state language often have little distinctive meanings as they happen to be the same in a nationality. But in India they refer to various categories. The terms common language and lingua franca must also be added to this list. Most people get confused bet-

ween these words and help to make the political confusions worse confounded by their loose talk.

Mother-tongue and regional tongue normally mean the same thing but as there are more or less bi-lingual or even multi-lingual areas in India, the term regional language has to be confined only to the language which happens to be the mother-tongue of the majority in that part of the land. As a matter of course where there are mother-tongues that are not regional tongues, the linguistic provinces should be formed not on the basis of the mother-tongue but on that of the regional tongue only.

On the All India plane, much loose talk is indulged in, under the term national language. A little insight into the jargon of politicians would show that this term is used to cover other terms also such as common language, lingua franca, state language and the national language.

State language, common language and lingua franca distinguished

But when applied to India these terms connote fundamentally different notions. A state language where it is not the mother tongue or regional tongue of the



majority of the people, is a language used as the instrument of administration by the state. It is imposed from above by the government in authority, often a foreign government or that of a ruler of foreign extraction, upon the people either with or without their consent, but scarcely ever with their initiative or through the expression of their free will.

A common language on the other hand is one chosen by the free will of the member states or provinces that agree to adopt it as their state language or language of internal and common administration.

A lingua franca is a common language confined to the exigencies of international or inter-state affairs alone between free or independent sovereign nations or states. It does not have the status of a state language either in internal or external intercourse. It has no binding upon the members adopting, being subject to fluctuations in the relations of the states. At any juncture another language can be adopted in its place as the most convenient one for the period or locality.

There may be a third class of common language also. The sub-states or member-states may choose to give equal status to

every one of their languages, accepting however one particular language as common base for the translations to and from every individual language.

The term national language always denotes the language spoken by the nation.

When people speaking more than one language agree to combine into one unit, the unit is strictly a state, and not a nation. If the unit agrees to consider any one of the languages as the language of the state, it is strictly to be called the state language or the common language of the state. It cannot properly be called a national language. The use of the words nation and national language to denote such state or state language may be merely one of courtesy and may serve a useful purpose in creating or promoting solidarity in the long run but it should not be scientifically understood in that sense.

The Scientific use of the term nation, to be precise, should be confined to unitary nation-states. States formed on the basis of a complex group of related nationalities are nations only in a looser or broader sense, to be distinguished by the phrase complex 'nation.'



There is no fundamental unity in India in the matter of language as the languages are more than a score, if we take into account the more important ones. Further no one language is spoken by an absolute majority of the people of the land. Under these circumstances, India can be called a nation only in the loosest sense of the term and the language it chooses to adopt for purposes of common intercourse cannot really lay claim to be a national language in the fullest and strictest sense of the term. At best we may call it a state language. But normally it can only claim to be a common language or a *lingua franca*.

Leaving the terminology, the question of language from the point of view of All India is really one of adopting a common language or a *lingua franca* or a state language.

Of these various categories of terms, the mother tongue and the regional tongue evidently refer to the individual national groups, that is, the member states or provinces as they are now called. The other terms have reference to the whole of India.

India's language problem therefore can be broadly stated as follows:—

Main aspects of the problem

(1) Which is to be the language of national education?

This question can be resolved into two. First, which shall be the primary language of education or the central subject of the curriculum of studies? And secondly, which shall be the medium of instruction?

(2) Which is to be the state language of the linguistic provinces or states as the case may be?

(3) Should there be or not be a state language for India as a whole? If there should be, which is the language to be so adopted?

(4) Is it advisable to have a common language for India? If advisable, which language should it be? What shall be its status, i.e. shall it be the state language of All India only or of All India and of sub-states or provinces also? Should it have a binding on the states as a common language or should it be only a lingua franca on a temporary basis?

(5) If a state language or common language of any kind is to be adopted, should



it be (a) one of the various mother tongues or can it be (b) a language extraneous to the land (like English) or (c) a language used for purposes of literature and tradition, divorced of every other relation to the life of the masses (like Sanskrit).

(6) If a language be pitched upon to serve as a state language or common language or lingua franca, what should be or would be the position of the mother tongues in the national and cultural life of the people? What relations should the former have with the latter? What would be the consequent effects of the same on the various aspects of the national life of the people?

With these questions as the starting points of our inquiry, we shall study the pros and cons of the various cases put forward in the realm of the language problem of India.

### III THE ALL INDIA ASPECT

The All India aspect of the language problem centres round two questions. First, is an All-India language necessary or desirable? Second, which of the languages shall be honoured with the choice?

Changed aspect of  
English

The place of a common language for All India is at present taken up by English. Ever since English happened to hold that place, there did not seem to be a language problem at all. But English is a foreign tongue and it was desired by the Nationalists to have one of the indigenous tongues in its place. But the Nationalists appear to have reckoned without the host. English, though a foreign tongue, happens to occupy its place not as a national tongue or even as common language in the strict sense of the term. It has been only a state language imposed upon the people from above by a powerful foreign government at the head of a heterogenous state. It was never adopted by the people or peoples of the land spontaneously out of their freewill. The moment the sanction of force is withdrawn, its political status also ceases. It can continue in that position for a greater or lesser length of time in accordance with the combined will or consent of the various sections of the people and even then only at the cost of their self-respect and of enormous energy on the part of their youth.

If any other language is to take the place of English now, it cannot be in accordance to



the early status of English viz. as a state language, but according to its new status, as a common language of convenience. In other words, any language, whether it is English or any other, can hereafter find acceptance all over the land, not on the basis of force but on that of common consent or choice only. English or no English, India can no longer have a state language in common; it can only have a mere common language or a lingua franca. This too is admissible on the basis of common consent only.

Can it now be said that there is any sign of such common consent at all?

One can easily see that under present circumstances a common language for the whole of India is out of question; for, India has already been divided into two dominions; Pakistan and the Indian Dominion. Any talk of common language now has perforce to be confined to that of the Indian Dominion alone.

Claims of English  
and the indigenous  
languages

Undivided India had coolly accepted English as the common language for long but the moment it was proposed that Hindi was to take its place, India chose to divide

herself on that basis into two camps. The Indian Dominion fell to the hands of the leaders of the school of Hindi and the Pakistan Dominion fell into the hands of those who revolted against it in favour of Urdu. But strangely enough, Pakistan's dislike to bear the yoke of Hindi has not been extended to English which continues to be its language of administration and for aught we know, may ever continue to be so. Nor does the Indian Dominion appear to be in a haste to bring down English and adopt Hindi. The best the Hindi school can do, and are doing, or are talking about doing, is to save their faces by accepting the supremacy of English and giving Hindi a secondary place beside the high pedestal of English. This shows that even when the force behind English is withdrawn, its prestige is yet strong enough to give it a status far above that of any other indigenous common language chosen.

If one can make out anything in the common welter of proposals and counter-proposals among the leaders of the Hindi school (which apparently is the most influential in the land) it is this: English cannot

The position of the  
Hindi school of  
thought



be dispensed with either in higher administrative affairs or in higher education. As a language of international or world status, it will ever occupy the leading position, even though in some modified form. But Hindi should be recognised alongside of it as the national or the would-be national (i.e. properly the common) language. The mother tongues should of course occupy a third place, limited in their extent to the province or sub-state where they are spoken and also further limited within it to the extent of yielding to the claims of English and Hindi.

This means that in administration as well as in education three languages have to take the place of two in every region. Nobody can say that this makes the diversity of the language problem in India simpler. For, as if the diversity of the regional differences were not enough, it adds to it by introducing further diversity in everyone of the regions themselves.

It may be urged that a common language would at least help common understanding among the various regions of India. But this plea can excuse the adoption of one common language, not two. The leaders of the land have of necessity to choose one of the two as

a common language; either we must continue to have English for both international and All India purposes or we have to forego the former and have Hindi or any other tongue as the common language for All India.

Some of the distinguished leaders in the political sphere at present do not stop with three languages in the realm of education and culture. As if to meet the educationists' criticism of the inadvisability of thrusting on the youth two languages other than the mother-tongue, they insist that the members of a multi-lingual state should develop a multi-lingual mentality by expanding their linguistic capacity to suit it. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar in his introduction to the Hindi Self-Instructor published by the South India Hindi Prachar Society has laid it down as his opinion that every Indian boy should equip himself with (a) a knowledge of his mother tongue for contact with the people (b) of Hindi for his All India contacts; (c) of Sanscrit or Arabic or Persian for the sake of his religious or cultural benefit and lastly (d) of English for international purposes. He would even recommend the study of one or more of the other languages of India in addition to these

Mr. Rajagopal-  
achar's suggestion



to round off his 'nationalistic' logic. 'Internationalistic' logic would certainly add a few more to the burdens already on the back of the poor Indian boy!

We do not belittle the advantages or the advisability of every Indian having a knowledge of as many languages as possible. World-wide travel Its impracticability and world-wide study of languages are perhaps the most liberalising agencies imaginable and, where possible and practicable, their influence would be far greater than any other system of education. But the study cannot be prescribed for any but the scholar, especially as the recommendation is not for one or even two but quite a large number of languages. It is also a general recommendation for members of every nation, not necessarily to the Indian alone. We may say that in India it can be commended with grater emphasis as it helps to lift one above his region to the All India or the international plane as the case may be. But Europe with its many languages has given to no language anything more than the status of a convenient lingua franca, and that too, for special purposes of international institutions and contacts or for culture, and not from the

administrative or educational points of view. In spite of this, the European has lost nothing in national or international status. If so, why should the unfortunate Indian boy alone be forced to cram into his feeble head so many languages? Nobody outside the group of political enthusiasts would dream of this as a practical proposition, and much less a national educationist! One may say that the necessity, (if there be such) of studying many foreign languages is a hall-mark of the inferiority or slavery of the group on which it is incumbent—for none of the ruling races of the world, not even the multilingual states of Europe are reduced to this level.

If one language is to serve the purposes of common intercourse in All India and international affairs, one would think that the principle of economy as well as the policy of least resistance would be in favour of continuing the use of English.

The case for English

The advantages of using English can be briefly laid down under the following heads:

- (a) English has the merit of being an international language which no indigenous language has.



- (b) It occupies the position of an All India language already.
- (c) It has the supreme merit of being the medium of western science and culture with all the technical or other terms ready to hand.
- (d) Adoption of English would not necessitate adoption of any other language except the mother tongue in the curriculum of studies, while that of Hindi or any other language will only have to be super-added to English.
- (e) English happens to have the greatest common measure of agreement among the various political groups and vested or other interests in the land. Several members of influence from within the Hindi school and several of the press agencies catering to the same have boldly come forward to support English. Further the Urdu School and the anti-Hindi school of South India have either tacitly or expressly accepted English in practice or in principle as their common language of contact.

- (f) Lastly in a part of the world just emerging from the mediaeval darkness and still well within its twilight, with the masses still deeply immersed in various degrees of superstitions, hide-bound customs, manners and institutions of the past, English is still of inestimable value as the language par excellence of the modern spirit of freedom and democracy.

As against the above irrefutable advantages the following defects may be weighed:

The Drawbacks of  
English

- (a) English is a foreign language difficult of attainment.
- (b) It is spoken or well understood by less than three per cent of the population
- (c) Its continued use as a common language imposes a continuous and never-ceasing strain on those who have to acquire it by dint of hard labour. It must be borne in mind that the linguistic type to which English belongs is by far different from the current type in India. It also necessitates an enormous



wastage of energy before getting familiar with the monstrosity of its spelling and the waywardness of its idioms.

- (d) English education is a force against national self-respect and is, when all is said on the other side, a denationalising force. It has created and is likely to continue to create a class of educated men out of sympathy with, and isolated from the interests and psychological make-up of the common man in the street. The smallest acquaintance with the difficulties felt by the non-English educated man frequenting the Government offices, public institutions or the so-called cultural society of the English-educated world, would convince any one that this language so far as India is concerned, is a symbol of social tyranny, class segregation and empty administrative efficiency devoid of the spirit of service. The English-educated officialdom of India has a name for efficiency, it is true, but it is at the cost of true nationalism. Nation-building

activities of India are never more than high-sounding phrases on paper as its foreign-based wooden frame work acts with ill grace on the indigenous environments.

Thus it may be seen that while no indigenous language can become a state language easily, English too cannot English cannot continue as common language for ever for long continue to hold that position. The best that can be said for it is that it has done much already for India and may do yet more for a time, shorter or longer as it may be, in whatever capacity it continues. But it cannot for ever be the common language of India. As for its international status, it is beyond the scope of India to determine it. India is free to exploit it in that capacity so long as the world accepts it. The student of World History knows, however, that with the shift of balance of power in the world, the international status of a language is also likely to change. The coming up of Russia and its language to the front line in the international arena after the Second World War is an instance in point.

A writer in the Hindustan Times has recently put forward the prospects of Hindi



also to step up to the position of English as an international language. As a matter of fact, apart from inherent or acquired attributes, it is up to any language of the world to attain to that position provided the nation speaking that language has the might or force to back it. Nobody even in Shakespesre's days would have dreamt of the present position of English in international affairs.

We shall discuss the advantages and disadvantages of indigenous languages like Hindi, Bengali, etc., in the sphere of national life in the succeeding chapters. But before closing this chapter we must consider the one other alternative possibility referred to in the opening para of this chapter viz. whether a common language is after all quite indispensable.

Is a common  
language indispens-  
able?

If one agrees that more than one language cannot be imposed even as common language on a region and that English is not to be any longer the common language, one has to consider the only other alternative suggested, that of carrying on without a common langnage. This is not impossible, as the conditions in existence in European

politics in general and in Switzerland and Russia in particular would show India can allow the mother tongues to take the place of national languages of state and education in the regional states and conduct common All India affairs either by a board of translation giving all the mother tongues or at least the most important among them equal political status ; or by adopting any language as common basis of translation or lastly by choosing one of the languages as a lingua franca for the time being, allowing for time to take its own course to suit the occasions and environments of the period. If this be done, a sense of national justice, equality of opportunity, equal protection of every language, group, interest etc., would be achieved and this will go a great way towards taking India nearer the goal of wider nationality than any artificially levelled-up nationalism on the basis of an enforced national or common language. In other words, inasmuch as India is, if a nation, a nation unquestionably of a complex type, it must have a variety of sub-national groups which have their own mother tongues as the national languages of a multilingual state. This scheme will do away with the bitterness incidental to the provincial or regional jealousies consequent on the choice



of any language of the predominant group. The amount of support for the continuance of English as common language is in fact due to such jealousies or fear of such jealousies or inequalities in the country's life in future.

Dr. Katju, a nationalist and one who holds a position so responsible as that of the Governor of the province of Orissa has put forward the claims of Sanskrit to be the common or national language. Needless to say, Sanskrit shares with English the merit of being above regional jealousies referred to above. But one cannot forget that it raises feelings of dissatisfaction of another kind viz. the religious. The Muslims of the Indian Dominion who do not seem yet to show any enthusiasm for Hindi are likely to take still less to this venerable language of the Hindu gods. Its other disadvantages are too apparent to require emphasis—its being more than foreign to the land as it is spoken neither within India nor without; its being highly artificial and thrice-hard to acquire, its catering to the instinct of mediaevalism and its antipathy to all that is good and great in a rising social-democratic republic of the coming world.

Dr. Katju: the case  
for Sanskrit

Having thus given a bird's eye view of the various trends of the all India problem of language from the objective point of view of a critic, we shall now embark upon a historical study of the problem. We shall see what lessons of the past are in store for the future, and whether amidst the welter of mutually destructive criticisms, we can offer anything of a more constructive kind.

#### IV THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

The main point of contention today in the political sphere does not appear to be the language problem. It is however one that has a fundamental bearing upon it, for it is nothing less than the problem of Indian nationality itself.

Unionists and  
separatists : Origin  
of cleavage.

The scholars of the nineteenth century fresh from a study of the nationalistic movements all over the West tried to apply the ideas of Western nationalism to India. The middle of the century saw in India an unprecedented and unexpected surge of nationalism (the revolutionary rising of 1857) which long continued to have its underground rumblings. This had its effect on national life. It was thought at the time that this suppressed



nationalism could be controlled only by drawing it into the channel of constitutional and administrative reforms, and as an aid to this scheme, the English Educational system was expanded and intensified by the Universities Act. The expected or wished-for results seemed for a time to fructify. India became English-minded and under the ægis of the Indian National Congress established with the support and co-operation of enlightened Englishmen, began its career with agitation for constitutional reforms.

The conservative elements of the British intelligentsia could not however rest content before this compromise. They began to probe into the Indian nationalist movement in search of its weak points. Every trait of difference from the Western nationalistic movements was avidly caught hold of as indicating a flaw in the Indian nationalism. Multiplicity of race, religion and language was considered to argue against the idea of nationality itself in India. Peculiarly enough nationality and state came to be confused, and India was considered to be unfit not only for a nationality but also for a national state or multinational. Needless to say, the latter point does not follow India, even if it is not

a nation and therefore unfit to be a unitary state, can yet become a multi-national state like America, Russia or Switzerland.

So long as these ideas remained as speculations among the foreigners or the semi-national English-educated minority, it did not seriously affect the country. But the

Widening of the  
gulf.

conflicting interests of various groups in the land slowly crystalised themselves into two political groups, some favourable to the nationalistic idea and others opposed to it. This is the origin of the cleavage between the Unionists and the Separatists.

The cleavage began as a matter of theory but did not long remain in the theoretical sphere. The different standpoints soon became the war-cries of real interests and have now succeeded in one case at least by dividing India into two states, Pakistan and the Indian Dominion.

There is a partial semblance of truth in the Unionists' blaming the foreign elements for encouraging the separatists generally but the truth is only partial, as no foreign encouragement can take root without a favourable condition in the soil itself.



Logically speaking, the Unionists and the Separatists have opposite and contradictory points of view that can never meet except for a fully-armed fight. It may be granted that

Exaggeration, mis-  
handling and mis-  
conceptions.

this is just what any foreign interests could wish for. But the responsibility for this position is not that of the Separatists alone. The moment when the nationalist, out of a misdirected enthusiasm, called his opponent an anti-nationalist or a sycophant of the foreign interest, the seed of partition was irrevocably sown. For there cannot be logically any anti-nationalist group within a nation. We may say that in reality there is no anti-nationalist group in India. What are called nationalists and anti-nationalists (communalist, religious, racial or other) groups are really the sub-national groups of a complex nation. If this is grasped, the differences between these are not unbridgable, provided a really nationalist group or leadership stands outside and beyond the sub-national groups and helps to unite them. The misfortune of India has been that in the critical periods of cleavage and confusion, no such enlightened group or leadership had arisen or had been recognised if it arose.

That the Unionists and the Separatists cannot unite in anything common is a myth. We have shown in the first chapter that they have practically no differences so far as the position of the mother tongues in education or the regional division of the land is concerned. Indeed the inactivity of the High command of the Congress in giving effect to many of its accepted and cherished principles such as linguistic division of the provinces, abolition of the Zamindari system etc., has made the non-Congress Separatist elements to make common cause with the left-wing parties of the Congress.

Apart from these local or sub-ordinate interests, even in All India problems there is really greater unity than is often recognised. The idea of a federal form of Government for India has been accepted by all parties as early as 1935. The formation of linguistic provinces makes this idea of federation not much different from the complex-national states of the American or the Russian type. This shows that the Unionists have not altogether thrown aside the plea of the Separatists that India should not be considered as a unitary nation with a unitary state.



The differences between the Unionist (Congress) and the main Separatist (League) groups began to be acute only after the adoption of Hindi. The literature of Hindi was predominantly Hindu in its viewpoint and it was feared that the Muslims would suffer, as their case <sup>The Role of Hindi in the rift.</sup> would be relegated to the position of a merely sectional interest and that too, of a section out of sympathy with what would be accepted as the national point of view. This suspicion was at the root of the dissension between the Hindu and the Muslim national view-points and developed in the long run into the idea of a Hindu nation with Hindi as the national language and a Muslim nation with Urdu as the national language. It is evident that language was at the root of this division.

It cannot logically be said that Muslims alone are responsible for this point of view. For the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha are one with the Muslim League in the acceptance of the two-nation theory. The only distinction between the Mahasabha point of view and that of the League is that the former insists that India or Hindustan belongs to the Hindu nation and that the Muslims, though a

separate nation, have no territorial or cultural claims other than that of protection in India as a group of foreign domiciled citizens.

A Historical study of the Hindi movement would greatly add to the legitimacy of the Muslim League point of view. The

The Muslim League point of view. Congress adopted Hindi as the national language only

in 1922. The Congress and its accredited leader Mahatma Gandhi are responsible for the spade work in its favour in South India. But in North India itself the banner of Hindi had been raised earlier by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Aryasamaj. The latter have done much of the spade work for the propagation of Hindi and the Devanagari script which was in disuse during the greater part of the British rule and during the Mogul rule in the 18th century.

The revival of the Hindi script was in fact made the spear-head of a Hindu revivalist movement and of its great apostles established the Nagari Pracharini Sabha to propagate the Nagari or Sanskrit script as well as to introduce a greater percentage of Sanskrit vocabulary into Hindi as a counter weight to the Arabic and Persian vocabularies of the Muslims. Thus unwittingly the Hindu



leaders gave rise to the High Hindi of Hindudom as opposed to the High Urdu of Islamdom.

When the Muslim viewpoint gained weight due to the support given to it by the League and its enlightened, if uncompromising Leader Qaide Azam Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the Congressmen came forward with an offer to tone down Hindi into Hindustani as a compromise towards Urdu. But this did not win the good faith of Muslims. For no reconciliation succeeds if it is only a political gesture in a crisis. The real call for reconciliation would have been the invitation to take up a common point of view. If the Hindi School had emphasised the mother-tongue or indigenous aspect of Hindi from the very beginning or at the least turned the attention of all people to it gradually, the compromise would have had a greater degree of support. They could also have yielded up their points of view in the script, for the insistence on the Nagari script is an ever recurring reminder to the Muslims of the Hindu point of view inasmuch as it is the script of Sanskrit which has been considered the holy language of Hindudom. But under the present circumstances the 'Hindus' of India (or at least of North India) are averse

Efforts at reconciliation unsuccessful:  
Cause.

to emphasise the mother-tongue point of view in Hindi or in any other of the languages of India. Sanskrit has been allowed to be the incubus on the various languages, and when one such is hailed up as a national language, the Muslims too follow these by enthroning the incubus of Arabic or Persian in place of Sanskrit. In fact the choice of Hindi rather than Bengali or any other Indian language has been specially unfortunate for the Unionists for it has helped the growth of the Hindu-Muslim clash, since there was a Muslim Hindi (Urdu) established as a political and literary common tongue under Muslim rule earlier than Hindi itself under British rule.

Thus it will be seen that the Unionists have wittingly or unwittingly cut the ground from under their own feet by their choice of Hindi as the national language. They have invited a hornet's nest in the North from the Muslims which by itself would have made their claim impossible. But another hornet's nest has been breeding in the South. The Tamils and other South Indian groups have always fought against the impact of Sanskrit on their national life. While the other linguistic groups of the South have practically

Opposition to  
Hindi in North and  
South.



succumbed to the ' all-conquering conjuror of the North ', Tamil shows a vitality that continues the fight well into the twentieth century and bids fair to make it a Pan-South Indian, if not an All India cause in the long run.

The demand of the Muslims of India (mainly of North India) has been to emphasise the Muslim cultural point of view in the mother tongues as well as in any speculative national tongue lieu Urdu. This of course would help to focus into one the Muslim standpoint, but it cannot be said to attract the Hindus or other non-Muslim sections. As against this the South Indian Tamil point of view is to emphasise merely the mother-tongue aspect of language, whichever the language may be. This is a point of view that offends none but a few vested interests. It is really against no national or sub-national group. Hence it is likely to win the support of All India in the long run and to create a healthy national spirit in the land. Apart from the choice of this or that language, it has a basic principle involved viz. that the language should be neither Hindu nor Muslim but should be strictly national. With the growth of true nationality and democracy in India and a consequent growth of self-respect

and self-confidence within the nation or sub-nation, the healthy and wholesome point of view of the South may find acceptance all over India in preference to the religious-biassed Hindu or Muslim points of view of the North and in preference also to the extraneous or quasi-national point of view of the English-educated intelligentsia.

The problem of Indian nationality and that of a common language for India are really inseparable from each other and in fact have a history behind them far older than that of the modern nationalistic movement. It cannot be said that before Hindi was spoken of as a common language and before English was thrust on the land to occupy such a position, India had no language contact in common. For Sanskrit had practically been such a language so far as India outside Tamilnad was concerned. The student of history has not turned his attention on this point so far, but it is well worth the study.

When we say that Sanskrit was the common language of contact in the greater part of India before the advent of the English, we do not mean that it was a state language or even a common language for administrative

History of India's  
quest for a common  
language of contact.



affairs. The rulers of the land even when their sway spread beyond their original regional boundaries, never looked up to Sanskrit for purposes of administration. In all probability, for aught we know, the regional language of a ruler must have occupied the position of a higher state language, leaving the other regional languages to take up a subordinate place in local affairs. To this day this is the actual case in practice in the village administration of India. Where Sanskrit came in was only in the religious, cultural and literary spheres. Indirectly this had its effect on the states as well. The advisers to the ruler were chosen from among the priestly classes. In the region of law, while the prevalent customs and traditions of the region or group were normally followed, in extraordinary or critical occasions the Sanskrit theologian or priest had his say in the matter.

But it was in the purely cultural sphere that Sanskrit had its cementing force. It is now wellknown that Sanskrit has played the role of a sacred or religious language in the North. But it was not merely this; it was also the cultural language of more than one reli-

Different roles of  
Sanskrit: Three  
periods.

gion. The Buddhists and the Jains of a later day, in addition to the various so-called Hindu sects, vied with each other in Sanskrit scholarship and had their own reputed literature in the same during this period. North Indian Universities gave a platform for India-wide contests in religious or literary fields. Renowned scholars like Sankaracharya, Ramanuja or Chaitanya started on wide conquests or Digvijayas in the wake of the territorial conquerors like Vikramaditya and helped to spread the prestige of Sanskrit in the North.

In still earlier days Prakrit and Pali vied with Sanskrit as common languages. It was at this period that Sanskrit served as a common language for Hindus of the North only. As against this Hindu sacred language of the North the Buddhists had their Pali and the Jains had their Prakrit. This prevalence of three languages as common languages of India on the basis of three religious groups synchronised with what we may call the age of Puranic Hinduism which lasted from the first century A. D. to about the 16th. It was also the age of the Sanskrit literature proper as distinguished from the Vedic, Upanishadic and Itihasic writings.



Going back still earlier into the history of language, we find there were clearly two strata in India's national life—the people talking the various popular languages and the cultured probably talking the same, but using a specially chosen dialect of it, viz. Early or Old Sanskrit which was the parent of modern Sanskrit. The Vedas and the Upanishads were written in this Early Sanskrit. The language and the thoughts of those writers were equally divorced from those of the people and to the student of history their religious systems also differed vitally from the religion of the people. The people of India then as now had their popular Gods like Siva Vishnu, Subramanya etc., and popular beliefs and customs, while the leisured classes or priests had their Indra and Varuna and later on their Brahma, their sacrifices, Vedic hymns and the like. In later times the impact of popular religion gave rise to Upanishadic inquiries and to new religious movements like Buddhism and Jainism and a host of other movements and religious denominations now known only to the specialised student of History viz. the schools of Nyaya, Sankhya, Vaisesika, Lokayata etc.

Thus the quest for a national or common cultural language, consciously or unconsciously is to be seen from very early times in North India.

A Pinch in the shoe.

Until recent days however the common language was not thought of in terms of politics or administration but in that of religion and culture only. Of these two items, if culture had the upper hand, India would have succeeded long ago in solving her language problem partially at least. As it was, it was the by—play of religion in this sphere which has had unfortunate results. Sanskrit which was the language of the upper middle classes and the priests of North India in the Upanishadistic days, became, in the early mediaeval ages, the cultural language of the better part of the middle classes of the land but in later mediaeval days i.e. after the 8th century became the religious language of the Brahmanic propagandists and in recent years has degenerated into the language of the priestly class. Its revival as the common language now has been mooted by some enthusiasts as has been remarked earlier. But the associations of this language now give it a more than religious or sectarial aspect—for it has come to stand for a priestly and communal domination in national life



which, apart from the question of language has already vitiated national life even under the 'enlightened rule of the Britisher'.

Is there a possibility of India's choosing for herself a common language which will have the merits of promoting common solidarity of the land The two alternatives. on the one side and at the same time promoting and protecting the multifarious religious, cultural and linguistic groups on the other? In other words, can India have a super-national language which shall promote the cause of **the regional languages or mother tongues** while also promoting the spirit of co-operation on a fundamental basis among them?

If there is no such language, India must of course carry on with either English for the present or with the several regional languages or mother tongues with no cementing force other than the help of translators. But the genius of the suppressed nationality of the land does offer a lingua franca from underneath the debris of ages of misdirected and destructive forces. The powers that have had their play in India in the past and present had somehow missed the only vital principle in its life and even in the present day when

every theory and sub-theory is analysed, few indeed have made even a passing reference to the possibility of raising this vital truth from among the dust-heap thrown over it layer on layer. It shall be our endeavour in the ensuing chapters to lead the reader into this neglected region of national life.

## V. THE WRITING ON THE WALL

The historian as well as the scientist has had to fight against the prejudices and dogmas of age, religion, race, country and sectional groups. His task is all the harder because his subject is human life itself and the whole length, breadth and

Drawbacks of  
India's historian

depth of it, spreading out into all time and all aspects of life.

The instrument he has for his search after truth is also more imperfect and inadequate especially in relation to the special difficulties pertaining to his subject, the human life, which is by far more dynamic and complex than phases of nature that form the material of the physical scientist.

If history is complex, India's history is decidedly much more so; for it extends from the dawn of human civilisation or pre-history itself, and, unlike other ancient cultures of the kind, extends to our own day. Further its



actual presence furnishes as many problems to the cultural historian and politician as its past to the antiquarian. Under these circumstances, a study of Indian antiquities, Indian history and Indian political and cultural institutions require the development of a most scientific, imaginative and impartial outlook.

Western scholarship has done a great deal for India in sifting the facts of History from the dust of ages of myth

and in giving to facts themselves a sequence of order and

National literature  
and History

a chronological setting. But history according to modern conceptions is much more than a string of facts or events; it is a study in the growth of cultural institutions and an enquiry into the causes and the effects of national phenomena. It is here that the moderns have their prejudices, pet theories or preoccupations clogging their path. Despite great advances in archaeology and scientific research, development of this side of history is still a desideratum.

Even where other sources supply the bones or skeletons of history, a national literature is of great help to the historian since it mirrors the actual life of the nation. In a land like India where the facts of history

are less continuous and connected together than its culture and where they offer not one plane of reality but various divergent planes or facts a national literature forms perhaps the best source of history. But in spite of this the literary resources of this land are not exploited in full.

The scientific historian again, begins history with the present and, with the study of the forces working in the present, seeks to build up the past as a growth into the present and as one having its projection towards the future. The historian of India has been remarkably colourblind in this respect also.

A national literature is the expression in art of the national language of the people. It

Which is the national literature of India? Claims of mother tongues of the north

goes without saying that a national language capable of producing a national literature

has of course to be the mother tongue of the nation. But the mother tongues of India are many and the greater part of these languages, especially those of the North like Hindi, Gujerathi etc, have either no literature worth the name or if they have, they are but recent growths in comparison with the hoary antiquity of India.



While India has a history and a national life of such an immemorial antiquity, the literatures and even the languages of the North are of recent origin. Hence they cannot be said to be vehicles of national literature and still less to be sources or records of ancient Indian history or cultural developments.

The only literary language in use in North India during the earlier periods of history is Sanskrit, if we at present leave out of account Pali and Claims of Sanskrit Prakrit which are cherished outside India only. It may hence be expected to be a record of national life and thought in the land. But unfortunately the literary life of Sanskrit came to a stop long ago. With the rise of the other tongues to cultural activity it completely ceased to function and even earlier than this, a gradual freezing of its vitality can be noted for centuries. Its freshness of output may be said to have begun with the first century or, to be more correct, with the fifth century A.D. (the age of Kanishka in the first century or that of the Guptas in the fifth) and closed with the seventh or ninth centuries. Prior to this it had a traditional collection of religious writings

that have but an antiquarian value and are called literature only out of courtesy or in the loosest sense of the term. The rather unfortunate use of the word 'literature' in the English language to denote two different conceptions, one a mere collection of writings and the other the literature proper, has often led to a confusion of ideas. Sanskrit literature proper may be said to begin distantly from Valmiki and definitely from Asvaghosha and Kalidasa only. The so-called literature earlier to this period (1st century A.D.) is only a collection of writings or oral traditions having interest for antiquarians, philologists and students of comparative religion alone.

Even during the comparatively short period of its life Sanskrit was not the spoken language of the people. The spoken languages were the scantily recorded Prakrits, Apabhramsas and other dialects. The literary output of Sanskrit also could scarcely be said to have touched the life of the masses as it was mainly an artificial revival of the old themes of the Itihasas or Puranas under fashionable newer settings and forms. Very few of them have any historical or social interest or background. They are therefore of little value to the national historian.



The only other sources of history in North India are the Upanishads in Old Sanskrit i.e. Literary Early Prakrit, and the Vedas in Literary Old Prakrit and the Buddhist and the Jain works in Pali and Ardha-Magadhi Prakrits.

These too are religious in content and have a comparatively **artificial interest**; they are cumulative social products of ages and hence lack the value of chronological or personal background which alone can render them as trustworthy records of national life. Hence **while they may be of use for historical research into antiquities**, they are scarcely national in view of their short duration and isolation from the realities of life around them.

If one has to seek for a truly national literatures in India, one has to turn to the South Indian group of languages only. Here alone, are the literary languages real mother tongues of the land. Of these, languages like Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam have their living literatures stretching back at least from the ninth, twelfth or the sixteenth centuries. Of course even these literatures are religious, fictitious, translational or secondary only, though not as far divorced from life as the literature of Sanskrit.

Tamil in many respects forms an exception to the general run of literary languages in India. The national or popular religious revival began here far earlier than in the rest of India and further as a matter of fact it was admittedly the parent or grand-parent of all of the subsequent All India religious movements.\*

It should be noted here that while Tamil has a wide literature bearing upon this parent religious movement of India, it forms only a secondary and later layer in its extensive literature. However even this secondary layer is almost as ancient as that of Sanskrit beginning right from the fifth century onwards, and un-

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\* The popular religious movement of North India is the Neo Vaishnava Movement or the Bakthi Movement that had its full tide between the 16th and 18th centuries, the highlights of the movements being Chaitanya, Kabir, Ramdas, Tulsidas and others.

A similar movement of both the Saiva and the Vaishnava denominations swept over South India as well between the 7th and the 12th centuries. It must also be noted that the leaders of the Northern Vaishnava movement derived their inspiration from the Alvars of the Southern Vaishnava movement through the medium of Scholars and Saints like Ramanuja and Ramananda, the latter of whom was the preceptor of Ramadas & Kabir.



like Sanskrit, coming down to the present day. Despite the slight religious emphasis it has got, it is generally far more original than the literatures of the other Indian languages and, what is more, has a greater modern appeal at present, thanks to the continuity of the tradition into the modern age by mystics and poet-saints like Pattinathar, Tayumanavar and Ramalinga Adigal

The supreme merit of Tamil however consists in its having remnants of a glorious literature (we allude here to the Sangam classics which include in their list the illustrious Kural also) coming down to us from an Indian culture (i.e. the Dravidian culture) which is even older than the Aryan culture and which goes further back than the literature proper of Sanskrit. This literature has even greater originality than the literature of Sanskrit and possess high merit and classical perfection unparalleled by the literature of any other language in India if not in the East itself. Except a few disinterested savants few have drawn upon this inestimable mine of the cultural history of India.

Coming down from the realm of the past to the problems of the present, South India, especially Tamilnad has another great and intimate bearing on the destiny of India. The phrase 'Indian India' has often been applied to refer to the Princes' States but in reality the phrase would be far more fitting in its application to Tamilnad. It is still the home of the so-called orthodox Hinduism and has been the fountain head of all popular movements of a religious cultural or artistic character. The Dravidian type of architecture, the Carnatic and other systems of music, the Bharata Natya and other indigenous systems of histrionic art, cave-temples with their paintings and sculptures, the solar reckoning of the calendar and last but not the least, the very accursed caste system have their fullest development in this part only. Almost all the systems of philosophy and religious thought of India have been worked out here. Of these some like the Saiva Siddhanta doctrine have specifically moulded the Southern types while others like the philosophical systems of Sankara, Ramanuja, &c, have assumed full All Indian stature and have become common possessions of the North and the South.



Even with regard to religion, almost all the successive waves of religious movements of India with the sole exception of the Upanishadic can be seen reflected much as in a mosaic in the literature of Tamil and to a lesser extent in that of Kannada. Tamil alone of all the literatures of the Indian languages has the Pre-Jain, the Jain, the Buddhist, the Saiva, the Veerasaiva, the Vaishnava and lastly the Brahminical, Musalman and Christian (both Catholic and Protestant) sections represented alike in its literature.

Prof. Rangasamy Iyengar has indeed pointed out in one of his Madras University lectures in Trivandrum that Tamilnad is a perfect nation A nation within a nation. within a nation. The other languages of India (especially those of the North and still more those of the North West) never entered into national life, art or literature until recently. Nor did they succeed in forming a definitely demarcated regional or political unity. The so-called fifty-six kingdoms of the puranas were simply parts of an indefinable expanse now called India with no definite linguistic associations. Further as the languages were all non-literary or uncultured, they did not long continue under the

same name or in the same form. The limits of kingdoms or even provinces of imperial rulers never coincided with any national or sub-national or linguistic region. Bengal under the Palas and the Senas (tenth to fourteenth centuries) and Maharashtra under Shivaji and the Peshwas (17th and 18th centuries) are the only plausible linguistic regions that form an exception to this rule and this too only for a period.

As against this, Tamilnad has almost from the earliest times of the historical period a well-defined boundary line from Cape Comorin to Tirupathy or possibly much farther up during earlier days. It has been reduced since only by the rise of a newer literary language, Malayalam, and a newer sub-nation (Kerala as it is now called) alongside of it about the 16th century. Tamilakam never was, except under British rule, part of external Indian empires like those of Asoka, Akbar etc. and even in recent days was only under rulers of extraneous extraction like the Nawabs of Carnatic, Naiks of Madura &c. whose sway was confined within the region only. The three Tamil Kings of antiquity, the Pandya, the Chera and the Chola, and later on four, with the addition of the Pallava, ruled it in parts.



Occasionally one or other of these ruled the whole of Tamilnad or went beyond it to form super-national states as imperial rulers.

The land had a language of its own, a literature, a popular religion, a philosophical system of its own, a system of medicine, (the Siddha as opposed to the Ayurveda of the North) a system of Astronomy, architecture and art types of its own.

The question whether India is a nation has come to prominence in recent days. Some of those who maintain that India is not a nation, hold that India is a conglomeration of nations. But our account above shows that the latter statement also is questionable from the facts of history and if the different linguistic regions are different nations they have become so only as a matter of recent growth. Hence they cannot claim to be typical nationalities of this ancient land. As against this Tamilnad is and has always been a perfectly rounded nationality running back to the immemorial past of India's glory. While the rest of India had incessantly to change its national character in various degrees due to foreign contacts of an unhealthy nature and thus had lost

vitality and living growth, Tamilnad has kept the age-old culture intact and has built upon it newer structures having a virility and a living growth. Occasionally at intervals of peace in the North it has even lent from its own store of national life **sustenance** to the kindred peoples of the North.

The historian of India (whether foreign or indigenous) has either had a non-Indian focus to his historical lens or at least a non-South Indian one. Out of the untold millennia of India's historical existence, only the latest few thousands have yet seen the light of research; but even in these thousands all but the period of British occupation extending over an infinitesimally short span of a hundred or more years are dismissed in a few pages, South India being credited sometimes with a few lines or sometimes with none at all. India's literary, religious or cultural life in which the South has had and still has the lion's share are treated as if they had no pertinent relation to the land at all. The politician and the religious leaders follow suit and the Hindu of the North is in blissful ignorance of the fact that the home of his

The soul of India  
missed in India's  
history.



living religion, nationality and culture is in Tamil, in Tamilnad and in Tamil literature, mainly if not wholly.

The hand of India's destiny has written in bold characters from end to end on the wall of its history the fundamental national truth of the land viz. that Tamilnad is not an appendage of India or even a part but is the very heart and soul and brain of India. Severred from India, Tamilnad can yet live and live gloriously, even as Tamil language can thrive all the better for its purging of the negligible Sanskritist elements imposed or being imposed on it by a handful of people that owe allegiance to regions beyond their homeland. But India will have little national life divorced from Tamilnad.

From a cultural and historical viewpoint it may indeed be said that India is a part of Tamilnad rather than that Tamilnad is a part of India. In this respect it would be illuminating to recall what Mahatma Gandhi remarked years ago about another great region in India—Bengal. Speaking in the early Twenties in a Social Reform Congress in Bengal, he said that the music and poetry of Bengal was heard everywhere in North India but that Bengal was that music itself.

Culturally speaking he would say India was part of Bengal rather than vice versa. A historical study of the relations of Tamilnad with the rest of India would show that a similar statement can be made with regard to Tamilnad with greater and more comprehensive force of reality.

We have frequently referred in our pages above to the question of questions agitating the politicians of the day viz. the question of India's nationality. We have purposely refrained from giving a categorical answer to the question so far because the true answer depends on our grasp of South India's relationship to India. The truth about India's nationality in terms of its past and present is this: India is neither a nation at present nor a mere conglomeration of nations; it is just a vast expanse i. e. an undeveloped mass of nationality with its national core in South India and its fully developed seed of nationality in its national nucleus, the Tamil Nad.

India's national destiny is dependent on two items: one is the expansion of the nucleus-nationality of Tamilnad gradually absorbing the whole of South India and ultimately the whole of India; the other is the recognition by All India



of the fundamental lessons of its history—that true national culture must be based upon mother tongue, and that the mother tongue itself should keep true to its indigenous character and genius.

It may be noted also that philologists are of opinion that the general characteristics of the Indian languages as of Indian race make-up are fundamentally Tamilian or Dravidian and that the general tendency of growth or change in Indian languages including Sanskrit itself is in the direction of Tamil even where the languages in question are most remote from Tamil in contact.\*

The major language problem of India as we have shown cannot be solved finally by adopting any foreign or indigenous language as state language. Such a thing is, even if possible, unnatural or harmful; nor can it be a permanent common language as no language so far suggested is likely to appeal to the multifarious interests of a land torn with religious, racial and sectarian feelings of a semi-feudalistic past that does not promise to depart early from the land. The only sane possibility is the adoption of a *lingua franca* or common cultural language for purposes of translation, such as would be based on the

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\* See Next Chapter.

fundamental indigenous genius of the land and accepted by all the groups for the time being, if a free consent of the groups be obtainable.

As for a national language, the term is a misnomer for any but the mother tongue. As

Mother tongues and Sanskrit; trend against national genius

it is, even the majority of the mother tongues are slowly being pushed off their natural and indigenous potentialities by undue Sanskritisation. History shows that Sanskritisation has so consistently changed the genius of many of the languages so that they either die out or transform themselves out of shape within a few centuries. Sanskrit is not only a dead language, but one that infects with its own benumbing and death-dealing touch every living language with which it comes in contact. Hence a truly mothertongue-based mother tongue alone should and can form the common national language of the land.

As for a lingua franca that should help India's nationality the name of Hindi has long been in the lips of many

Lingua franca: alternatives to Hindi

people. In the earlier days Bengali and Tamil were spoken of as possible rivals to Hindi. Urdu on account of Muslim support, English on the



principle of status quo and Sanskrit on account of the partiality shown for it among the vested interests and the priestly classes, have since been pushed up as alternatives to Hindi. But neither Hindi nor Urdu, neither English nor Sanskrit nor Bengali would really bring peace to the land, much less national solidarity. Hindi would raise the counter blast of Urdu, and Bengali though spoken by Muslims as well as Hindus has as much of the Hindu viewpoint as Hindi. English as a foreign language cannot long occupy the present position and Sanskrit is a mediaeval and priest-ridden language utterly out of tune with the spirit of modernity.

Tamil despite the cumulative effect of its various advantages, has ever been waived aside or put off from consideration by a most effective conspiracy of silence—conscious or unconconscious. This has been aided by the eminently accommodative disposition of the Tamils themselves and the scant respect given to the Tamil masses by Tamils and non-Tamils alike. We would be the last to encourage the imposition of this or that language of India on the other sections of the country. But every Indian especially the North Indian must have the case for Tamil

presented to him so that he may consider it on its own merits. We claim nothing more or nothing less than this.

## VI A COMMON NATIONAL LANGUAGE

That India is not a unitary type of nation is admitted on all hands, even by the Unionists. Yet the talk of a national language somehow continues. We have indicated above that the term national language can mean but one thing scientifically, viz-the mother tongue of the land. In India with its scores, if not hundreds of languages, it can be applied to the regional languages only. What has been talked of as national language is none other than a plausible term of courtesy for the common language chosen or to be chosen for the land.

But there is another sense in which a single language can be termed national language for India. Since every regional language in this multi-national state is one among the national languages, any such language definitely chosen to cement their relationships in a fundamental manner can be called the common national language. But to merit this term it must really be more than a national

Indispensable factors  
for common national  
language.



language; it must aid in developing the national aspect of the various national languages themselves.

If at present, for the sake of argument Tamilnad could be considered as a nationality by itself outside the general Indian pattern, it can to some extent be plausibly maintained that the rest of India has a possibility of being cemented together by Hindi or still better by Sanskrit.

Whatever might have been the case in past ages, during recent times at least all these languages have freely and willingly borrowed their vocabulary, their thoughts and even their culture ready-made from Sanskrit. People are not wanting who appear to glory in this. Hence it may be said, as it is often indeed tacitly understood, that they would all welcome either Hindi or Sanskrit as their common language of contact or heritage. We shall weigh the effects of such a contingency on the language aspect of the national life.

Is unity through  
Sanskritisation of  
mother tongues pos-  
sible? Merits of the  
case

The merits of the case are apparent to any one. As all these languages are expected to be amenable or even anxious to import Sanskrit words there may not be much diffi-

culty in their adopting the same set of technical terms for Science, Philosophy and other departments of modern thought. The visionary of the Unionist Nationalist group may extend in fancy the possibilities of the ultimate unification of all the spoken tongues or at least the literary tongues of the land with the exception of the Tamil group (Dravidian languages) or at least Tamil.

In languages like Telugu, to take an instance from the South Indian group itself, it has been accepted as a theory of style and criticism that language is literary in proportion to the percentage of Sanskrit words in it and in inverse proportion to the percentage of indigenous words. As a matter of fact the native word in these languages is often taboo in the literary dialect according to the mediaeval grammarians of the land. In Malayalam even the Sanskrit grammatical forms are sought to be introduced. If this kind of tendency goes on (as it appears to do), the dream of the visionary may soon become a fact and apparently India would indeed get over her present multi-linguistic problem, for all the languages are likely to become one, viz. Sanskrit in the long run.

The above is not a fantastic picture or a mere argumentum ad absurdum for one could



glean out of the more ambitious of the literary output of some of these languages whole paras or stanzas at least that can be held to belong to Sanskrit or any of the languages of India short of Tamil, provided they are printed in the script of those languages. The 1st stanza of the national song 'Vande Mataram' for instance is pure Sanskrit & can be part of a Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, or Telugu poem as written in those scripts.

While such a consummation to the language problem would perhaps satisfy the ideal cent per cent Sanskritist of the land, we cannot be sure it will Absurdity of the case in effect. be to the taste of the masses or to their interests in the long run. For it will mean nothing more than a repetition of the age-old linguistic phenomenon of non-Tamil India with, on the one side, a non-regional literary dialect of an All India plane indistinguishable from Sanskrit and on the other side the spoken regional dialects in all their varieties. This new situation would indeed be worse than that obtaining at present, for the spoken dialects will be non-literary and uncultured and and the literary dialect will be the same old dead language, Sanskrit or a new edition of it. The multi-linguistic problem will not be solved, only

it will be worse than now, if no worse than in mediaeval ages of Sanskrit when the mother tongues were non-literary and uncultured vernaculars and Sanskrit the literary lord over them. The mother tongues, needless to say, would then cease to be literary and lose this new literary birth of the British period once again.

Thus it will be seen that the adoption of the principle of Sanskritisation will in effect be equivalent to the adoption of Sanskrit itself as common literary language of India in the long run. It will also mean the extinction of the mother tongues as literary media. No one will hold that this will add to the solidarity or nationalisation of the land. The same argument will hold good in the case of the adoption of Sanskrit itself as common language or even literary language of culture.

Our above imaginary argument based on would-be possibilities, it may be noted, has not taken into account the existence of the Muslim or Urdu problem. Like Tamilnad, Pakistan the homeland of the Urdu school, will also have to stand outside the picture. So in addition to a further denationalisation



of the central North Indian group, the adoption of Sanskrit or even Sanskriticism will in the long run alienate the South, East and West and divide India into four entities at least.

The adoption of Hindi in place of Sanskrit or even of Bengali or any other North Indian or South Indian language except Tamil will have effects not dissimilar to those sketched above.

We are finally forced to the consideration of the last but one alternative, the last alternative being none other than the ideal promulgated by the separatists, namely that of splitting up the land into at least three independent entities—Pakistan, Hindustan and Dravidistan or Tamilnad as the case may be. Realising the logical culmination of the rejection of Tamil, we shall enter upon the merits and demerits of the Tamil case.

Alternative to separatists' demand-elements required of the desired common language.

The ideal common national language of India, if it is to satisfy the demands of national solidification and to avoid the pitfalls above mentioned, must have the following characteristics.

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(1) It must be an indigenous language;

(2) It must be a spoken dialect for otherwise it will not have popular contact and support in the long run.

(3) It must at the same time be a literary dialect also for otherwise it will not be a fit vehicle of national expression in art nor be a medium for the higher thoughts and aspirations of the people.

(4) It must be a typical Indian language, as far as possible coeval with the origin of national life and culture in India or in other words it must be an ancient language with an ancient literature, original and indigenous in the main in content, vitality and growth.

(5) It must embody the best, the fundamental and the most beneficial elements of national life.

(6) It must be capable of adopting itself to the modern nationalistic and democratic outlook on life. Its literature should neither be clogging reason or culture with mediaevalisms and superstitions nor encouraging these among the masses.

(7) It must be one that should develop the individuality of the national languages



or mother tongues, while promoting their ream spirit and a broad-based union among them, based on equality of opportunities and development.

(8) It must be easy of study.

(9) It must be spoken by as great a number of the inhabitants of the land as possible.

The items cited above with the exception of the last one would appear to be almost a special pleading for Tamil. But none can gainsay that they form almost indispensable attributes for a common national language in the circumstances existing in India. If there were any plausible excuse for the conspiracy of silence and almost deliberate avoidance of teference to the very existence of a Tamilian point of view and a Tamilian case in India, it must probably be this item viz. that the language is spoken in the southern extremity of the peninsula only and by about twenty millions of people out of a total of four hundred millions in India i.e. just a five per cent of the inhabitants.

The apparent drawbacks of Tamil

We shall begin our discussion with the consideration of the demerits and hence at

the far end of the list. In view of the locality of Tamil speaking area, Tamilnad has the disadvantage of being at what would appear to be an extremity or tail-end of the sub-continent. In point of the number of the speakers also it holds just an equal position with Telugu so far as Madras Province is concerned. If the linguistic area of the whole of India including the princes' states are taken into consideration, Tamil may occupy a slightly inferior place to Telugu, inasmuch as the addition of Tamil speaking areas of Travancore and French India may not compare in strength with the Telugu speaking areas of Hyderabad.

Further among the languages of North India, Hindi and Bengali at least have a population higher than that of Tamil. Necessarily Tamil occupies only a third or fourth place among the spoken languages of India.

We do not deny that these two points are a serious drawback for the claims of any language that can come up as candidate for general approval as common language of India. We shall see what the advocate for Tamil can say in attenuation of these defects.



As for location, if Tamilnad occupies an extremity of the Peninsula, this is also historically the fundamental special advantage of the land

*Geographical as against historical aspect of Tamilnad*

It has greatly helped it in having peaceful contacts with the civilised world beyond the seas from ancient days through commerce and maritime activity. It has also kept it secure against the invasion of comparatively barbaric hordes that came into India through the North or the North-West during mediaeval or historical periods, when India had lost the capacity of effectively protecting herself or resisting foreign influences. It is as an effect of this that South India has always been the last and sure refuge of every lost cause in the North and the base of operations and the recuperating and consolidating ground of every All India movement.

For instance when the newer Northern forms of Buddhist and Jainist viz. the Mahayana Buddhism and the Svetambara Jainism gained strength in the North, the South became the refuge for the more ancient forms, the Hinayana Buddhism and the Digambara Jainism. These now have their strongholds respectively in Ceylon and in Tamilnad and Karnataka.

The latest wave of mediaeval religious expansion—the so-called Neo-Vaishnavite movement or Bhakti cult of Krishna and Rama had its starting point in Tamilnad itself and carried its all-conquering banner throughout the length and breadth of the land. The Saivaite school receded before it almost everywhere, remnants lingering somewhat only in the extremities of the land such as the Maharashtra in the West, Kashmere and Nepal in the North and Bengal in the East. But the strong-hold of living and growing Saivism (the Siddhanta school of Saivism) as opposed to fossilised cults (Saiva sects of North India) is at present Tamilnad alone and It is indeed strange significant that the very birth place and the base of operation for the vaishnava expansion has proved to be the defensive stronghold of Saiva the weaker, though older branch of the popular religion of India.

The earlier history of Vaishnavism itself (which is yet comparatively less known) is another instance in point. Home of Pre-Aryan cults' Hindu and Non-Hindu Historians are not agreed as to the original home of this religious movement. But it is beside the point at issue for us whether its home was South



India or North India. That it was a popular Pre-Aryan cult like Saivism and Jainism and had to contend against the Vedic practices in earlier days is recognised. Its fortune in North India is happier than that of Saivism perhaps in later days; but the reverse of this is true of earlier times. Saivism was earlier adopted into the Aryan fold, in North India while it was Vaishnavism that became subject to the bitterest persecutions. Tradition has it, and historically there is not much reason to deny it that a strong detachment of Vaishnavas from the banks of the Jumna (reputably under Sri Krishna himself) had to flee from the North and migrate south ward via West India or Maharashtra to the extreme South. Hence even though the Krishna cult become a wide spread country religion in the long run, it has remained always the special group cult also of the community called Yadhavas in Sanskrit and Ayars in Tamil, among whom as mythology would have it, Krishna lived and died, making love to the Ayar damsels. Thus Tamilnad was not only the base of the offensive sweep of later Vaishnavism but also the defensive refuge of of earlier Vaishnavism.

Again the Upanishad philosophy of the North and the Vedic religion of an earlier age slowly lost ground before the Buddhist expansion from the sixth to the second century B.C. Between the second century B.C. and the seventh century A.D. they had to contend with Buddhism with all their strength and with every armoury at their disposal. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar in his "Tamil Studies" has gone so far as to assert that the invasions of the Tamil kings into Ceylon and the North as far as Ujjain or Kosala (modern U.P) in the early centuries of the Christian era were not mere political excursions but religious crusades in defence of the orthodox Brahminic cults against the Buddhists or Jains. In addition to these military aids, scarcely less militant support also came from the South in the form of the intellectual digvijaya of Shankara and Ramanuja and to a lesser extent of Madhva between the 8th and the 14th centuries, and still later of Madhava or Vidhyaranya or Sayana of the 14th century.

It may be noted in passing that as Tamilnad had furnished the armoury for both camps in the Saiva-Vaishnava rivalry, the renowned All India centre of culture, Kanchi



(famous even in Kalidasa's time as the premier city of Sanskrit culture in India) supplied the foremost leaders not only for the Neo-Hindu revival but for the Buddhist and Jain reactions also. Ding-naga the uncontested All-Asia leader of the school of Buddhist logic and Dharmapala the Asiatic apostle of Buddhism were worthies of Kanchi in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., a period reputed to be the golden age of Hinduism in the North.

Geographically and historically as well, the position of Tamilnad in the Southern extremity has not made her life isolated either in relation to India or to that of the world.

Central as well as  
unique position in  
India's national life

She has always held a central position in India as well as in Trans-India regions. While there were imperial rulers in the North as well as in the South, the imperial suzerainty from the South had many distinct features on its side. The Southern emperors were always purely of indigenous extraction and their expansion began from their motherland. This cannot be said about many of the imperial rulers of the North. Kanishka embraced Indian culture only later in his life and his imperial centre was outside of India and he belonged to a foreign stock. The

Mughals were foreigners to begin with and they continued Persian as their state language well into Akbar's reign.

Another distinctive feature of the Southern empires was that they were maritime as well as overland and spread over the whole of India as often as to lands beyond the seas like Ceylon, the Andamans, Burma, Malaya and the East Indies. Often they established foreign dynasties and adopted the land of conquest as their own, but they long cherished the religions, languages and culture of their land in their personal capacity.

The political power of the Tamils has long since waned, but in activity beyond seas, in trade or in any other capacities they still retain their lead. As a result the Tamils form a predominant factor in point of numbers alone among the overseas Indian nationals.

The Tamil speaking world is lesser in extent and figures of population than a few of the other languages of India and hence its importance has been held to be a subordinate one in India. But it should not be forgotten that a large portion of the Tamil speaking

Only Indian language spoken overseas in all the seas and continents



world is outside India. For the Northern part of Ceylon is culturally a part of Tamilnad even if it is not so geographically or politically. As a result of overseas commercial enterprise, labour migrations, and various other historical incidents like colonisation, the Tamils form an important minority at least in many parts of the world—though indeed they form the major group so far as numbers are concerned in various small out-of-the-way regions like Mauritius and other isles.

It has been a favourite saying of the imperial Britisher that the sun never sets where the British flag flies. This enviable power of the Britisher has been an effect of various acts of aggression suppression and oppression of the native population of the various continents by the whites—a phenomenon that is not a closed chapter even today. This aspect of Britain's glory however, is coming to be a thing of the past. But it may be said that in a humbler and less offensive way the sun has never set and may never set where the poor down trodden Tamilians talk their neglected Tamil language. For there are Tamil speaking South Indians in large numbers in almost all the continents, in the West-Indies

and British Guiana in America, in South and East Africa, Mauritius Islands, in Ceylon, Burma, Malaya etc., in or on the borders of the Indian Ocean, in the East-Indies and other Pacific Islands and in some of the cities of China, Japan and other countries. Within India itself in various fields of enterprise the Tamilian has carved out nooks of social or other utilities for himself in Governmental or non-governmental institutions, though in a characteristically humble way of service. The principal cities of the North like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi have their moiety of Tamil speaking suburbs. Most of these expansions, it must be remembered, are results not of exploitation on the part of Tamils but of more or less spontaneous commercial urge or forced migration in the hands of the exploiting groups themselves.

The expansion of the Tamils overland as well as overseas is of the most inoffensive kind as the Tamilian is never aggressive either openly or surreptitiously. His genius is just the opposite of that of the Jew; he merges himself so completely in the culture he adopts. This can be illustrated by another peculiar phenomenon in Tamilnad of the present day.

Native genius of  
Tamils accomodative  
and cosmopolitan



If the Tamilian has gone out of his homeland in search of the crumbs of service elsewhere he has allowed his own homeland's riches to be shared or exploited by immigrants from outside, from the North as well as South. His kinsmen the Malayali and the Telugu have come into his country and worked and lived for generations and have been free to live apart with their own languages and customs undisturbed. If many of these have become perfectly Tamilised, it is due to peaceful and natural contacts and there is no instance of social exclusiveness, isolation, or ill-will or compulsion on either part.

It is of great interest to us to find that today amidst loud talks of Tamil-Andhra differences or clashes of interests, the Telugu-Tamil is trusted with the highest position in Tamilnad in the name of the Tamils while any opposition to this Telugu-Tamils comes, if at all, from the Andhras only and not from the brethren of the Tamil country. It is remarkable that the Tamil allows a Telugu to be a Telugu and treats him as a Tamilian while the Andhra claims him to be an Andhra but treats him as a Tamilian. This is not all. While every Tamil politician recognises the claims of Dravidian kinship

of the South Indian and also accepts his super-national affinities with his Indian brethren, he finds no other group reciprocating the same in this spirit.

Not only the Telugus, the Malayalis and other South Indian Dravidian groups but also the other Indian interests have played, and are playing their part fully in the Tamil India of the present as well as of the past. The Mahrathas have come in the wake of Sivaji's conquest of Tanjore and have taken part in the life of Tamilnad in every aspect, as colonists, officials and business men. They have become sons of the soil as completely as the Telugu and the Kannada Naidus, Naiks, Reddies and other communities. The Gujerati Banker and businessmen are using Tamilnad as the main field for their expansion and as their market at present. The Tamils have not resented this till recently and when the Congress regimes have made unfair preferences in their favour at the cost of the sons of the soil.

Thus Tamilnad and Tamilian have not been an isolated or narrow group in India. As a matter of fact Sanskrit literature and Vedic culture have had their prosperity here as nowhere else and Tamilnad's contribution to Sanskrit is not only greater than that of any



region but it more than rivals the share of North India as a whole. The Tamil kings and the magnates of the past and present have richly endowed Sanskrit and Vedic schools and colleges, not to say other charitable institutions for the benefit of the priests and it can safely be said that despite the narrow anti-national outlook of the Sanskritist in the South, there are more institutions in Tamilnad, religious as well as cultural, in support of Sanskrit than anywhere else in India.

Having thus shown that what appears on the surface as a drawback of Tamil super-nationalism is not a drawback at all but a special item of strength in so far as the common interest of the whole of India is concerned. We shall now enter upon the decided merits or advantages of the Tamil case.

## VII THE CASE FOR TAMIL

'The unconscious is the alone perfect' is a dictum of Carlyle that applies to the case for Tamil. The Tamils have never been conscious of their case because of their non-assertive and pliant attitude in every issue of All-Indian importance. But their case is

The Tamilians' non-assertive attitude an asset for India

all the stronger on that account, as the wider public of India has very little to fear from them. Even when they carried their arms and their sceptre to the North, \* their love of freedom for themselves coupled with their sense of fairness to others prevented them from imposing their language or point of view outside the limits of their own region. When their Bhakti cult spread out into the length and breadth of India, they never seemed to insist or wish or even recognise that their language and their religious literature had a natural and unrivalled place in it. With such antecedents it cannot be thought that now when they are the lowest of the low, willing to sink much of their own individuality in the wider unity, they should use their decided advantages in the interest of any but that of All India.

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\* The imperial Cholas not only carried their arms to the North but having achieved the hegemony of the whole of the Gangetic plain and Central India ruled through Viceroys at Ujjain, holding the Muslim invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni and Ghorî at arm's length they ruled Hindu India for a century and served for India its religion and culture at a critical period.



With this foreword we shall enter upon the consideration of the special case for Tamil.

(1) Tamil is one of the spoken and living languages of India. It is often said that there are in all no less than 243 languages spoken throughout the length and breadth of India. But this number includes many that are mere dialects and many that are little more than uncultivated speeches of hillmen or tribal folk. The chief languages of India are counted as upward of a score. Even among these, Hindi and Bengali in the North and Tamil in the South hold a leading position on account of their Historical Literary, Cultural or Political Importance.

Merits of the case for Tamil. (1) One of the living languages.

(2) Tamil is the only spoken language of India that has a rich, ancient and varied literature that is more than 2,000 years old, going back as early as the first Century A.D. and beyond. From internal evidence as well as external, the language, literature and culture of the Tamils are shown to have a glorious past even earlier than this, though how early it was, we are at present unable to ascertain definitely. The discovery of the extant portion of the ancient literature and the

2. Most ancient varied and rich literature

ascertainment of the date of a portion of it have been matters of recent investigation; it is more than possible that research would prove portions of it to go back far earlier and we may discover portions as yet unknown to us. The extant literature itself however bears the marks of a long growth of centuries and even millennia earlier than this.

So far as can be ascertained from our present stage of knowledge of the History of the literatures of India, Tamil literature is really far more ancient than the literatures proper of Sanskrit. The Vedas and the Upanishads alone are likely if at all to be coeval with or to approach in antiquity the ancient portions of Tamil literature so far known. Further the earliest period of the Vedic and Upanishadic literature and their composition, their authorship or authorships, etc., are as yet undecided. They are neither Sanskrit proper in language (the name Sanskrit being newly given to the classical Sanskrit) nor are literature proper in quality. Moreover the literary and cultural antecedents of Sanskrit are far poorer than those of the Tamils of a corresponding age.



(3) Tamil alone among the languages of India has had the good fortune of being truly national in its catholic or comprehensive attitude to religion. India can boast of a variety of religions present and past. But the literatures of India, of Sanskrit as well as those of other languages have catered mainly to only one or two religious groups or even sects, the prevalent type everywhere being the so-called Neo-Hindu or Vaishnava and the 'Brahminical Hindu' types. Tamil literature has more than its share of Brahminical writings, but it has also a fuller and richer part for every other religion or sect like the Saiva and Vaishnava who form the prevalent popular Hindu types, the Jain and the Buddhist, the Veerasaiva, the Muslim and lastly the Christian of both the Protestant and the Catholic cults. This comprehensive nature is even distantly approached only by Kannada among the languages of India.

3. Comprehensive-  
ness and catholicity  
of appeal to all reli-  
gious groups

(4) As a result of the above distinction Tamil has the supreme advantage of appealing to one and all of the multifarious religious denominations of India. Further Tamil language possesses an authoritative religious and

4. The Illustrious  
Thirukkural

secular code in the illustrious and world-renowned Thirukkural. This inestimable work has been acclaimed as of their own persuasion by every religious group in Tamilnad as well as outside. For example the Saivas, Vaishnavas, Arya Samajist, Brahma Samajist, Buddhist, Jain and even the Muslim and the Christian have claimed the book as of their own convictions. As this sacred book has an undisputed claim to be the common Bible of all religious groups and to be likewise the crowning jewel of Tamil literature, the adoption of Tamil as common language of culture in India would prove to be a panacea for all the evils due to religious differences.

(5) The Kural also emphasises the Tamilan point of view condemning the prevalance of caste distinctions and, what is worse for India and Hinduism alike, the Varnashrmadharma culture based on racial and other iniquities. A death blow to these vicious ideas alone can make India a nation among nations in the long run. Tamil would greatly advance such a glorious ideal of religious and social reform.

5. Best handmaid  
to the reformist.



(6) Tamil literature especially of the early Sangam period is unique in India or even in the world in several respects. It is original and true to nature and life. In the

6. Originality and veracity of Tamil especially of early Sangam literature

latter aspect it excels even Greek literature and the Sanskrit literature of its pristine period i.e. of the times of Kalidasa, inasmuch as the Tamils have studied the various aspects of life and nature by analysing them into different regional groups or 'tinai's'. It is also the only mother tongue literature in India that is mainly secular. The secular and religious sections of life are here well-balanced and drawn in their true proportions. The religion of the Sangam Tamils is broad-based but not tyrannic, devotional and yet not narrow, and imaginative but not mystifying or ritualistic. In this manner it may be said that the Sangam literature alone is fully typical of the Tamilian as well as the truly ancient Indian culture.

**The veracity of the Sangam literature makes it an ideal source for the Ancient History of India.**

(7) Sanskrit has been considered to be the Sacred language of India for long and yet *from a purely religious point of view*, Tamil has far better claims to be regarded as the sacred language or the language of the

7. The real sacred or religious language of India and Hinduism

National religious life of India. This may appear as untenable on the first instance, for many Hindus vaguely hold today that the Vedas of Vedic or Early Sanskrit is somehow at the root of their religion. If Hinduism means performance of sacrifices and worship of Indra, Varuna or even Brahma this can of course be maintained. But no one can say that Hinduism as Hindus today understand it means this or ever meant this mainly or even partially.

The daities of popular or real Hinduism of the cultured classes are Siva and Vishnu, whose temples fill the whole of India and whose worshippers form practically cent per cent of the Hindus today. The form of worship in Hinduism is also not through sacrifices but through temples and temple rituals. The Vedas have none of these forms; nor do they have the least reference to any of the various Hindu beliefs or national customs and manners that are and have always been typically Indian or Hindu. Hence the Vedas have no place in Hinduism of today or any day.

It cannot now be maintained that Hinduism is even a historical or evolutionary development from the Vedas. For the worship



of Siva and Vishnu appear to be well rooted in the land even in the forth century B.C. as Megasthenes the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta makes unmistakable reference to them. Nay, even as early as 2,000 or 3,000 B.C., in the pre-Aryan days, the worship of Siva in some of the typical Hindu as well as Jain forms and most of the typically Hindu or Indian beliefs and customs appear to have had their root in Indian life. Hence the Vedas have nothing to do with Hinduism of the present or past.

Even among the various forms of Hinduism practised today, one can easily see that the religion of the so-called priestly class of Hinduism (the Brahmins) is fundamentally different from that of the Hindu masses, South Indian as well as North Indian. The priests nominally hold the Vedas as their scriptures but they do not derive the best portion of their beliefs from them like the Arya Samajists. Nor do they depend upon the Upanishads as do all the orthodox schools of Hinduism proper and even the Brahma Samaj.

The priests really insist upon the Smritis or the law codes of Varnasrama Dharma as their distinctive scripture and hold them

sacrosanct. They are of course not satisfied with this: for they want to thrust it on the unwilling or willing heads of the poor and ignorant masses of the land. Enlightened leaders of India, Hindu as well as non-Hindu have always defied or revolted against this; and as a result, the priests and those who knowingly or unknowingly accept their point of view, have called themselves and are called by the rest as Smartas; while the rest of the people, the Hindus proper, call themselves either Saivas or Vaishnavas merely. Even those who neither accept Saiva nor Vaishnava forms and depend on the Vedas alone can strictly be only Vaidikas and not Smartas. Vaidikas and Smartas are both outside the pale of 'Hinduism of the people' but the latter are decidedly hostile to its central principles as well as organisation.

Thus it will be seen that in reality Hinduism should be the name only for the religion or religions of the Hindus ie. Saivism and Vaishnavism. The scriptures of Saivas as well as Vaishnavas are mostly, if not wholly in Tamil. We have in Sanskrit only the ritualistic portion of these religions and even these have their vogue only in the regions where the indigenous religious practices



still linger viz. in the South and in the extreme North and the East of India. Thus it will be seen that Tamil has more real claim than Sanskrit to be regarded as the sacred i.e. the religious language of India. If the Tamils recognise any other sacred language or languages, it can only be the other mother tongues of India, for the Tamilian idea of religious language is equivalent to the spoken dialects of the devotee of the religion itself. All that we insist here in this respect is that next to the regional tongues, the historical and cultural aspect of religion should be based on Tamil where it is not based on the mother-tongue. It should not on any account be based on Sanskrit. Sanskrit will have its place only as a supplementary religious language having application specially to the religious beliefs and dogmas of a priestly minority in the land.

(8) India is not only a land of many languages but it is also the home of many groups of languages. Of these the seemingly major group is the so-called Indo-Aryan of North India and the other is the Dravidian of South India. The distinction between these groups

8. Central language of the Dravidian group

is one of race-composition. Within the Indo-Aryan group itself Hindi has been chosen as the leading type by Hindus while Urdu has been preferred as such by the Muslims. A third one, Sanskrit, though not one of the languages spoken in India, has been awarded the honour of being the cultural language of the Hindus by the North Indians. While thus three types are recognised to represent the one 'race', the other, the Dravidian has been thought unworthy even of one and this race has been ignored in many circles as unworthy of mention and as undesirable where mentioned.

Tamil as the typical language of the Dravidian group deserves a place not only among the mother tongues, but also among the languages of the educational, cultural and religious institutions of the land. Its importance is really greater in this respect than that of either Hindi, Sanskrit or Urdu as it is the language of the basic race of the land.<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that the Muslims'

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1 The race map of India includes the whole of South India, the major portion of U.P. as purely Dravidian; Bengal and Assam as Manqolo-Dravidian, Sind as Scythian-Dravidian. The only tract marked as non-Dravidian is the Punjab and N.W. Frontier Provinces.



antipathy to the non-Muslims of North India is not based on any dislike of religions other than Islam, for the Muslim has no such antipathy to Christianity or other religions. His antipathy to Hinduism is mainly one of race, for the North Indian Hindu rightly or wrongly thinks that Hinduism stands for Aryan superiority. With the adoption of a Dravidian tongue as his cultural language, the Aryan superiority complex would fall off and Hindu and Muslim will live as one people in the North as now in the South, belonging to two religions but yet of one nationality or race.

(9) If the Dravidian problem of the South is never referred to seriously, much less so is the problem of the aborigines who number about ten per cent of the population of India.

9. All India aspect:  
contact with aboriginal language

Many of these aborigines are really Dravidians who have refused to bow before the Aryans or Aryanised Indians and have been ultimately reduced to take shelter in hilly or forest tracts. Their languages though counted with the Tamil group remain uncultivated. But this very fact has helped them in keeping aloof from Sanskrit and they preserve

what must be purer, if less authentic forms of the original Dravidian language.

The Dravidian uncultivated dialects are scattered all over India from the Brahui of the north-west, Gond of the central, Rajmahali and other languages of the eastern and the Toda of the southern regions of India. Tulu and Kudagu are also counted as uncultured Dravidian languages and come midway between the cultivated Dravidian languages and the aboriginal ones. Even if it had not been for the discovery of the Indus and allied cultures, the extensiveness of the Dravidian race and language all over the Indian sub-continent would be proved by the wide-spread nature of the uncultivated Dravidian tongues all over India.

Tamil has an unique importance in the Dravidian group not only as the oldest and the most advanced member of its cultured section but also as the meeting ground of the cultured and the uncultured sections, for even though it is decidedly older and more highly advanced than the other tongues, it has also on account of its earlier literary development preserved better the native elements of the original Dravidian. Indeed



all along history, the Tamil language alone has been specifically called Dravida Bhasha by the Sanskritists.

Thus Tamil has an All-India importance not only as the centre of the Southern Dravidian languages but of both the Dravidian languages of the South and those of the whole of India. If, as every nationalist would wish, the aborgines are to be raised up to the level of the rest as early as possible, the recognition of their representative typical language would certainly help to speed up such a consummation. The inferiority complex under which the Dravidians and their brethren the Aborgines suffer will disappear as soon as they realise that this race has a language and literature equal if not superior to Sanskrit, the proud representative type of the Aryans that it is held to be.

(10) The mother tongues of North India as well as Sanskrit and the Vedic languages are all taken to belong equally to the Aryan stock of languages by the lay public and generally this is accepted by the scholars also, though the latter admit that in point of vocabulary, grammatical basis and general tendencies, they have more or less resemb-

10. Basic 'Indian' language.

lence to the Dravidian type. This fact is often explained as due to the predominance in number of the original Dravidian or other non-Aryan races all over India.

But if and when an All-India philology or Indian philology comes to be written, it will be found that the Dravidian language, its phonology, vocabulary, grammatical forms and tendencies, idioms and thoughts and even traditions have influenced and through subconscious race-instinct continue still to influence every language in India, old or new.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhandarkar has pointed out a dozen words of Vedic usage which he considers to be decidedly of Dravidian derivation. Many Telugu linguists have added to the list by finding Telugu words themselves in Vedic and Sanskrit works.

A comparison of the languages of India on the one side and the languages of the world racially connected or supposed to be connected with them would show that the Indian languages are all of one pattern from the arrangement of the alphabet to the order of words in the sentences and have a

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i. Note that Sanskrit sounds and Vedic phonology itself is better expressed by the Southerner today than by the Northerner.



family similarity in their idioms. It is remarkable that this similarity is greater in Sanskrit than in Vedic, greater in the mother tongues than in Sanskrit and lastly greater in the languages on this side of India on the interior than those on India's border on the outside, especially on the west. Further occasionally Sanskrit, due to its All-India contact naturally enough shows more Dravidian characteristics than other tongues in idiom and grammar in the later phases of its development <sup>1</sup>

All this would go to show that though the crude origins of the North Indian languages may be Aryan, their basic characteristics and genius and a greater part of their vocabulary are formed out of the current speeches of the land itself which must have been mainly Dravidian with an intermingling of foreign pre-Aryan or post-Aryan elements in the North Western and Eastern extremities.

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1. See Chapter viii of this work for elaboration of these points.

Our above case is likely to stagger the average Indian of today by its novelty.

South India's contribution essential to India's culture.

While our small booklet would not allow a full consideration of the case, we shall furnish but two instances to illustrate our argument.

(A) Indians are proud, and justly proud, of the logical and scientific arrangement of the letters in their alphabet. Western critics have till recently affirmed that the art of writing was introduced into India somewhere about the ninth century B.C, by the Dravidian merchants from the 'Near East' i.e. Babylon. But the discovery of the parent pictorial system of writing in Mohenjodaro has destroyed this fond hypothesis. But even before the light of archaeology cleared the point, it had to be admitted by the Western savants, that the Indian alphabet was an indisputably 'modern' (i.e. scientific) improvement upon that of the middle East as well as upon that of the modern West. The Sanskritised Indian naturally called this an irrefutable proof of the superiority of the Sanskrit Aryan, forgetting for the moment the fact that the Westerner had pointed to the Dravidian as the earlier originator of the



alphabet. He is also unwilling to assimilate the significance of the Indus discovery.

But it does not require more than ordinary common sense and an impartial recognition of truth when it presents itself to the mind's eye to see that the credit for the arrangement and the evaluation of sounds of the alphabet should naturally go to the Dravidian, or in other words to the indigenous Indian race and not to the Aryan; for of all the Aryan races the Indo-Aryan alone has adopted it.

(B) Secondly in point of culture also the modern Indian or Hindu is proud to call himself an Aryan, and if dubbed as Dravidian, would adopt the most shameful way of declaring himself at least an out-of-the-way distant relative of the Aryan rather than be said to belong purely to the 'accursed Dravidian' race. The high prestige of Sanskrit in India is mainly due to this mentality all along the mediaeval ages. He who is proud of Sanskrit is likely to be called an Aryan and if that is not possible, at least he would escape being styled a pure Dravidian!

Now an *a priori* investigation of the case would show that the Aryan has developed higher cultures in proportion to his contact

with the cultured world of the South i.e., of the Mediteranian and Indian lands and if Sanskrit is the most cultured or most worthy of the Aryan (Indo-European) tongues, it argues that it is due to the Indo-Aryan's contact with India. i.e., the Pre-Aryan or Dravidian India.

A comparison between the early Sanskrit literature and early Tamil literature would easily show this to be the case. But if the comparison is to be scientific, it must be borne in mind that Sanskrit itself is not a pure representative type of the Aryan. It was the language developed on the banks of the Ganges by the Aryo-Dravidians who were loosely called Aryans in later-day India, but who, in the earlier period (before 7th century B. C.), were looked down upon as a hybrid race by the superior or less mixed type of Aryan of the Punjab.

Now that the pure or nearly pure Aryan type of India with his stronger Aryan blood and language has gone out of the picture of India into Western Pakistan (i.e., Punjab) the problem of cultures scientifically speaking is between the purer Dravidian of the South and the Aryanised Dravidian of the North. Sanskrit is not the language of the purer



Aryans ' but is the literary language created out of a glorious synthesis of Dravidian culture on Aryan frame-work in the North.

The recognition of these points are likely to turn the focus of Indian culture towards Tamil and start a quite unprecedented national renaissance in India.

(11) The indigenous people of the country who have come into regional contact with the fully or partially Aryanised (or in current terminology, Hinduised) sections have in the past been known to the Hindus as the Panchamas or the Fifth Varna. This is the generic term of reference to them and of course they were split up into their old division of castes or clans also. The Pariahs one of the numerically important clans or castes of the South have sunk so far in their social status as to have their name broadcast throughout the world even as far as the English dictionary, as a term equivalent in import to the robber and the socially degraded sections of people of the slums. Incidentally it may be mentioned that it is just one of the two words denoting caste that have been honoured

11 Voice of Humanity and Democracy

with a place in the English dictionary. (the other word being the opposite one of the Brahmin).

The Britisher has used the term Depressed Classes or more respectfully the Scheduled Classes when referring to this group. Mahatma Gandhi has given them his own endearing title the Harijans which has the merit of carrying a double meaning, 'sons of God' (Hari-Vishnu) and the 'segregated persons'. (Hari-segregated, from 'har'-to remove). But the title of honour that the class has chosen to style itself with is no other than the term Adi-Dravidas or original Dravidians. As outside Tamilnad the word Dravida did not sound respectable or palatable even to the 'Depressed' classes, and as the word Dravida seemed to have associations with Tamil mainly in Sanskrit usage, the words Adi-Andhra, Adi-Kerala, Adi-Karnataka, etc., had their vogue. The aborigines also followed suit by styling themselves Adi-basis or Original Dwellers of the soil.

The leaders of the public of Tamilnad are the first group among the so-called 'caste-Hindus' to boldly come forward to use the term 'Dravida' in reference to themselves. It must be noted that even they adopted



this only through successive stages. Instead of calling themselves the people of the land which they really are in point of numbers or of importance or economically, they first coined for themselves the peculiarly negative and communal-sounding term 'Non-Brahmins'. But soon they adopted the name Tamilians on the basis of language and thence were led on to adopt the term Dravida.

Thus the term Dravida which denoted the Tamil speaking land and its language to the Sanskritists, and the race or the group of languages allied to Tamil to the historian and the linguist, has been traditionally used to denote also the lower classes of the people generally. Thus the word Dravida as well as Tamil may be seen to have a three-fold significance, one of language, another of race and a third of class. It is as a result of these associations that Tamil which was highly respected as the cultural language of India in the whole of Greater Dravida i.e. Dekhan, South India and Ceylon in the earlier ages, gradually came to be silently ignored in the later ages by the Sanskrit dominated Pundits of the land.

We have had occasion to remark in an earlier chapter that the strength of the chain

lies in its weakest link. If India is to advance in strength as a nation or super-nation, it would be possible only in two ways; by strengthening the greatest number among the masses and by raising up the weakest, the lowest and the most depressed of the land.

Tamil as a language and as a literature is the creation of a people who have been one of the most, even if not the most cultured ancient nations of the world. It is also the typical representative of the ancient Indian indigenous culture and race. But Tamil also happens to be the language of the most neglected group in India, and the symbol of the aspirations of the down-trodden and backward classes and regions of India. Just as the uplift of the Depressed Classes would automatically help the advancement of all the suppressed or the backward classes, similarly the raising of the status of Tamil to that of the common national language will automatically raise up the status and prestige of the least among the real national languages, the mother tongues. Thus the voice of Tamil happens in India to be the voice of humanity and democracy, holding out encouragement and support to the causes of the Depressed



Classes, the Aboriginal and of the other backward peoples and areas, and above all, of the mother tongues one and all.

We have so far represented the case for Tamil in all its varied aspects. But it is important for the All-India Unionists to bear in mind that this is nither the point of view of the Unionist merely, who looks at things from an All-India point of view, forgetting that real nationality must start from the linguistic regional states; nor the Tamil nationalistic group who voice forth the pent up feelings of the Tamilian whose love of his language and culture is often thwarted or suppressed or set at naught by the unenlightened and false nationalism of the Unionist. We have only trodden the sharp edge of the sword of nationalism that divides the two sections of the blade which seem to be the opposite sides of the sword. We shall in the closing chapters discuss the arguments and the points of view of the Tamil or South Indian nationalists in the light of the above clarification and against the background of the arguments of the leaders of the unionist sections of All-India.

Case for Tamil and  
case of separationists  
distinguished

## VIII ALL INDIA AFFINITIES OF TAMIL FROM A LINGUISTIC AND HISTORICAL POINTS OF VIEW

The languages of India are, on principles of fundamental origin and race divided into Aryan and Dravidian. The Dravidian group, whatever its affinities with languages or races outside India, is, and has rightly been, held to be exclusively Indian. The same cannot be said of the Aryan group, as there are far more Aryan languages outside than inside India.

Individuality of all  
Indian languages,  
Dravidian as well as  
Aryan.

Despite this distinction between the two main groups of languages in India, one finds that there is a 'group individuality' among all Indian languages, Aryan or Dravidian, which can be explained only on the assumption that the so-called Aryan languages of India are not, as is often believed, really altogether Aryan but only Indo-Aryan or Dravidio-Aryan. The Indian group individuality among them would then easily be seen to be the basic or dominant Dravidian element in both of them.



We offer the following analysis of the group similarities in all the languages of India including Tamil and Sanskrit and then we will pass on to the similarities between Tamil and the various sub-groups in the land in particular. The latter of these comparisons would clearly show that Tamil is the typical central language of India.

Similarities of a fundamental nature common to all Indian languages are the following :

(1) The Indian alphabetical system has the advantage of being scientific, orderly and extremely practical, especially when compared with those of the other lands. It is scientific because the phonetic values of letters and individual symbols have always a fixed relation ; no Indian language has one symbol for fundamentally different sounds or one sound for various symbols. It is organised because the vowels and consonants are grouped apart and individual letters are arranged with a view to the organs of their birth and their importance in other respects. It is practical because it is based more or less on syllabification, with symbols joined together from elements to form vowel-consonants.

(2) Another characteristic of the Indian sound system is the preponderance of the vowel sound 'a' (Tamil அ, Sanskrit अ) and the cerebral sounds of t, d; l; n; sh; d or zh (Tamil ழ Skt. ढ or ड; Tamil ஸ Hindi and Skt. ष; Tam. ஸ், Skt. श; Tamil ஸ், Skt. ष, Hindi ष. These sounds are practically exclusively Indian though a very few can be traced in the remote out-of-the-way languages of the world which are of course non-Aryan.

(3) The synthetic as opposed to the analytic type in the formation of words is characteristic of all Indian languages as a whole, and even where certain early Aryan or Indo-Aryan dialects have a bias towards the analytic occasionally, they tend in the long run to move towards the synthetic order. Already in Sanskrit the prepositions yield place to post-positions as in Tamil and the modern Indo-Aryan languages (especially the specifically Dravido-Aryan languages of the Ganges valley and of Central India) show this change even more markedly. The declensions of nouns and the conjugation of verbs also tend in the direction of the Dravidian agglutinative type and here again the tendency starts early in Sanskrit and is carried further and further as we approach the present day spoken idioms.



(4) The word-order of the sentence in all the languages is remarkably similar and tends towards greater similarity, always coming nearer and nearer to Tamil.

(5) The typical grammatical forms of Tamil are not only found everywhere among Indian languages, but wherever languages begin with a difference the difference gradually recedes to the background in the long run. Further the forms alien to Tamil are also early seen to be disused. For example the three degrees of the adjective, the prepositions, the use of the Aorist or present perfect in its original meaning, the use of the imperfect past tense, the forms for the future etc., are slowly ignored or misused in Sanskrit and completely disappear in the spoken idioms. Further, special forms for the infinitive of purpose, perfect participle used for forming new preterites and lastly the general disuse of the characteristically Aryan copulative verb 'to be' and its substitution by the predicative use of the nouns or adjectives or even other parts of speech, all-these are characteristically Dravidian or Tamilian.

(eg.) Tamil: Nan Vandatu avanukkaka:  
Skt: mama agamanam tasya artham,

(6) Various idioms of Sanskrit especially of a later day and still more, those of Hindi and other modern speeches can be traced to their real cognates in Tamil and the Dravidian languages. We may just mention one instance in passing. The impersonal construction for verbs like 'know', 'must', the peculiar use of the infinite for expressing obligation, command, etc., are of gradually increasing frequency in Sanskrit as well as the mother tongues of India. (cf.) Tamil: *Adu enakku teriyum* Skt. *tad me jnatam* Hindi: *Mujhe (wah) malum*.

(7) The phonological changes occurring in Sanskrit itself and in the Prakrits and modern languages as well, are in the direction of the Dravidian. For instance conjunct consonants are gradually disused. (cf. Hindi "Pasand" with Sanskrit "Prasada", Pali "Piyadassi" with Sanskrit "Priyadarsi, Hindi "Kannaiya" with Sanskrit "Krishna" and Tamil "Kannaiya" i.e. "Kanna-Aiya", Tamil Tivali with Skt. Dipavali and Hindi Divali).

(8) The typical Aryan words of an early age connected with Aryan customs are often substituted or re-formed to suit Indian context or environments. The typically Indian ideas of religious prayer such as *japa*, *tapas*, *puja*



etc., have found a Dravidian vocabulary expressing Dravidian or Indian concepts alien to the Aryan. Dr. Bhandarker the renowned Sanskrit scholar has traced a dozen words even in the Rig Veda to the Dravidian languages and scholars in Telugu have found even words of Telugu affinity in them.

Real scientific research into the All-India linguistic fields will show an astonishingly greater percentage of Dravidian words, idioms etc., in Vedic, Sanskrit and modern North Indian dialects.

Apart from these All India characteristics there are other elements of contact between Tamil and the sub-groups where Tamil agrees severally and exclusively with each other. We shall indicate a few of these.

We shall first investigate the points of resemblance between Tamil and Vedic, the earliest known literary dialect of the Aryans in India.

(1) The presence and the frequency of use of the cerebral 'l' (  $\ell$  or  $\bar{\ell}$  ) in Vedic as also in Maharashtra, exactly as in Kannada or Tamil. It is to be remarked that in classical or modern Sanskrit of a later date the sound is absent and grammarians had to explain

Points of resemblance between Tamil and Vedic.

earlier occurrence by the rule that they are to be used as variants (cf. Panini's rule (lalayor abhedah i.e. there is no distinction as between ल and ऌ or Tamil ல and ள). In Vedic they are not variants, for 'l' (ऌ) could interchange with d (ड) while l (ल) could not.

(2) Possession of short e and o (Tamil எ and ஒ) and of the localised sound varieties of the Visarga before k, ch, t, t, p, (क, च, ट, ठ, प) are paralleled by similar values for the aydam in Tamil before the same group of letters etc.

(3) Special indeclinable impersonal verbs in place of declined optatives of the other non-Indian Aryan languages after similar use of Viyankol in Tamil (cf. 'namas' for Tamil Porri, Porriya பேரற்றி or பேரற்றிய; 'jaya', Hindi 'je' for Tamil Vazhga, Vaziya வாழ்க, வாழிய).

The following are the special points of contact between Tamil and Sanskrit proper or classical Sanskrit of a later date.



(1) The unit of the written language throughout the world is the word. It is so even in the so-called modern Indo-Aryan languages of the North. But in Tamil and Sanskrit alone the letters form the units and hence words can run into one another. As a result in Tamil and Sanskrit and in the Dravidian languages allied to Tamil alone among Indian languages, we have the need for elaborate sandhi rules. Outside India the non-Aryan languages like Hebrew and Arabic also have this characteristic.

Points of contact  
between Tamil and  
classical Sanskrit.

(2) A specially well-defined and expressive form for the accusative case with the emphatic accent on the termination and a similar one for the vocative are elements common to Sanskrit and the Dravidian languages alone. In Vedic the accents are well marked though in classical Sanskrit they are often forgotten. cf. the first hymn of the Rig Veda: Agnim ile purohitam, meaning I worship Fire (or Fire-God), (divine) the priest.

(3) The Sandhi rules of Sanskrit are remarkably similar to those of Tamil. Special note can be made of the frequency of y and v or w after i and u, the avoidance of two

aspirates in the same word (Indo-Germanic Bhabhuva, Sanskrit Babhuva), the assimilation of soft and hard consonants, of nasals to those having affinity with the following consonants etc.

(4) Words like pattana or paththana (town) prithivi or prithvi, deha or dreha etc., betray their foreign origin both by their flexibility of form and their late currency. Indeed the first word occurring with the later-day mistaken popular use in Tamil gives us a clue not only to the origin of the derivation but also to the period of derivation as well; for the word originally cannnoted a sea-port town in the heyday of Tamil culture and degenerated to denote town quite recently. A glance at the map of India would show that all ancient place names ending with patnam or patam, within as well as beyond Tamilnad, are on the sea costs (cf. Kulasekarapatnam, Nagapatnam, Chennapatnam, Masulipatnam Vizagapatnam etc ).

Other interesting clues to Tamil origin are found in such blissfully ignorant plagiarisms of the Sanskritist as gunagopuram for Tamil kuna vayial kottam (shrine at eastern gate), Shadaranya for Arkkadu etc., in both cases unaware of the original significance of



the Tamil etymology; for Kuna in Tamil means east and ar is the name of the atti garland which was the dynastic emblem of the Cholas.

A still more ludicrous false translation is contained in the idea that elephants, toads etc., are connected mysteriously with fruits wood-apple or (*feronia elephantum* vila,) cocoanut etc. The Tamil phrases expressing the idea have an identical sense but its real significance is available in the earlier pristine literature of the Tamils. As this was lost in course of time and was not available to the mediaeval Sanskritists due to their unperfect scholarship of Tamil, they translated the current popular misconceptions. The word in question happened to mean both the animals referred to and the names of the diseases of the plants while the word 'unda' in Tamil has the inconvenient ambiguity of signifying 'eaten' and 'affected with'.

(5) The Tamils from early days had an elaborate all-comprehensive literature classified into three major groups iyal or literature proper, isai or musical compositions and nadakam or ocular performances on the stage. They had also various literary forms and had an advanced grammar including rules speci-

fically intended for drama, music and literature, the latter again including the sub-sections of orthography, etymology, literary criticism of both substance and form including prosody, rhetoric etc.

The Sanskrit grammar originally covered only the letters and words and when the other elements were added (needless to say, on the analogy of Tamil) they naturally took the form of separate systems of study extraneous to the grammar proper. Hence while the Sanskrit word for grammar viz. Vyakarana connotes only these two sections, the corresponding Tamil word Ilakkanam connotes all the other sections as well. Many of the special forms and sections of literary criticism that were developed in Sanskrit in later days, especially the alankaram or rhetoric can be traced to contemporary or earlier forms in Tamil.

(6) While rhyme at the end of the foot is characteristic of popular poetry in Tamil as well as of the poetry of modern North Indian dialects, initial rhyme and alliteration of a marked type as well as blank verse had their vogue in literary Tamil and Sanskrit alone. Initial rhyme was introduced into Sanskrit, it may be noted, only by the South



Indian authors. The same is also true, as we have remarked above, of the elaborate treatises on rhetorics and poetics. Indeed it is traditionally held, and recent discoveries have only emphasised it, that the authors of the first Sanskrit rhetoric and the late Tamil rhetorician Dandi are one and the same for he himself in a recently discovered work of his<sup>1</sup> claims to be an author at Kanchi in Tamilnad.

(7) Tamil and Sanskrit are the only two languages of India that have elaborated an original and perfect system of grammar for their respective idioms. It is now well known that the Sanskrit grammarians had a logical acumen and insight into the linguistic phenomena that have been an inspiration to the fathers of one of the latest of modern sciences, philology. The sense of logic and the instinct for perfection innate in the Indian mind reached a perfection in early mediaeval ages of Sanskrit mainly because Sanskrit ceased to be a living and growing language. But a similar tendency towards elaboration and perfection is seen in Tamil grammarians far earlier and the fact that it was a living language only gave a further

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1 *Avanti Sundari Katha* of Dandin recently unearthed

scientific interest to it. This quest for perfection is preserved for us only in the literary tongues of Sanskrit and Tamil. The very use of terms like Sanskrit or the refined tongue and Sen-Tamil or the refined Tamil signify this conscious attempt at artistic perfection of the language medium. But the term Sen-Tamil was no new term. It is a term coeval with the origin of the Tamil language itself or at the least its literature. The word Sanskrit on the other hand was given to the language only after the reform of that tongue by Panini. This shows that this conscious development took place far earlier in Tamil and was carried out in the other language of the north only at a later date.

The Tamils had an instrument meant to aid them at polishing their tongue. This was the institution of the Academies or Sangams. We hear of such academies only in Tamilnad. There does not appear to have been anything of the kind in the north even in very late periods. The tradition of the Academies in Tamilnad dates from the 7th century A.D. or a little earlier onwards and the absence of any tradition earlier is held by many to excuse a disbelief in it. But a little imaginative insight would discover that 'fiction



begins where truth ends.' The tradition is a sign of the cessation of the living reality and not of the reality itself. Even the life of great individuals is thought of objectively only when their age has become a thing of the past and a memory. The presence of a diffused light is noted only where the background of shade or darkness throws it in outline.

While Sanskrit had a literary name like Tamil, the absence of anything like literary academies or traditions regarding it is an indication of the fact that the origin of the refinement of language and grammar was in the south. This is further emphasised by the fact that the Sanskrit grammarian was less elaborate to begin with and reached a perfection under Panini and that too only partially i.e. in orthography and etymology, while in Tamil it decidedly reached perfection far earlier than the earliest extant grammar Tholkappiyam. Though we do not know anything definite about the earlier grammars in Tamilnad, we yet can easily see that Tholkappiar dealt with only a third of the full extent of his subject (i.e. Iyal only and that too imperfectly).

The continuity of the basic Dravidian subconscious tendencies in North India is proved by the following similarities between Tamil and the North Indian mother-tongues of today.

(1) The avoidance of Non-Dravidian sounds and sound combinations in all Indian languages is one of their common and basic characteristics. The gradual softening of the intervocalic consonants into voiced and open sounds and their frequent loss is found in greater or lesser degree in all languages at all times. cf. Sanskrit Kupam — Kufam — Kuvam—Kuam—Kuang (Hindi) exactly as in Tamil Akamkai — Ahamgai — Ahangai — Aangai—Angai ; noka (to feel pain) noha—no'a—nova.

Similarities between Tamil and the North Indian mother tongues.

(2) The dropping of the comparative and the superlative forms of the adjectives altogether in modern dialects and their following of Tamil in the use of the positive everywhere is almost conclusive proof of the influence of the Dravidian idiom on All India ; *for this is a case where the most expressive term is given up for the least expressive.*



(3) The relative pronoun and the relative adverbs which are characteristic of Aryan idioms are being gradually lost and their place is even today slowly being taken up by final expletives cf. Sanskrit: *Yadi Aham Agachcheyam*—Hindi: *Agar main Aum To—Aun to* etc: Skt. *Yam aham praharam, sa agachchhati* Hindi. *Mujh se mara hua admi idhar ata* T. *ennal adikkappatta avan varukiran*. Also cf. Tam. *evan nallavano, avan natpai virumbu* 'Who is good, his friendship desire' with Hindi: *Jo nek, uski dosti pasand karo*.

(4) The disuse of the dual number and of the declensional forms of cases and their displacement by postpositions (Tamil *urupu*) in North Indian languages to *singular as well as plural bases* are typical Dravidian usages.

(5) The introduction of terminations denoting gender and number as well as person in the verbs appears in some of the Dravidian tongues early and in some late. The tendency is actually carried still further in Hindi, thus showing an early development of the same basic principles in the North Indian Dravidian dialect of ancient days. It may be seen that the submerged ancient Dravidian

speech of North India was in some ways even more Dravidian than the Dravidian tongues of the south today.

(6) The word-order in sentences is carried nearer to the Indian or Dravidian type in the spoken idioms than in Sanskrit, though Sanskrit itself is nearer in this respect than the other Aryan tongues. It is possible on this account to translate all northern idioms word for word into Tamil or Telugu in a way which is not possible from the languages of the West or even from Sanskrit.

(7) The presence in greater or lesser number of native Indian words (classified as Desi words by North Indian as well as South Indian Grammarians) in the speech idioms, proverbs etc., and their approach to the Dravidian forms of expression is so remarkable that one wonders at the scant notice given to this side of the Indian basic similarity of culture and thought.

Apart from the similarities noted above between Tamil and the various sub-groups, there are others between Tamil and the other aboriginal groups of remote parts of India and with the cultured Dravidian languages of the South, especially with Tamil, its geographically remotest idiom.

Conclusion.



It must also be noticed that the antiquity of all Indian languages and their refinement is directly in proportion to their contact with Tamil or Dravidian and in inverse proportion to their contact with Sanskrit.

The comparatively earlier development of Bengali as against Hindi, of Kannada as against Telugu are instances in point. The late development of Malayalam is the only apparent exception to the rule, but it is really not an exception for the lateness is that of the language and not of its national literature. Portions of the early Tamil literature viz. the Silappadikaram and the Padirruppattu really belong as much to the Malayalam country as to Tamil and even as late as the early seventeenth century the Portugese missionaries called the Tamil language Malabar language as it was the language of Malabar as well as Tamilnad. To this day when Malayalam is supposed to be the regional language in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, there is a percentage of Tamilians in the remotest Malayalam districts and taluqs and in country parts who are not at all immigrants from other Tamil districts. They are really the 'lower' classes and the Christians who have refused or failed to adopt the Sanskritised Malayalam idioms and remained Tamils.

## IX THE VOICE OF THE SOUTH

India is a Babel of tongues as well as of political ideologies. Till recently South

India was on the political plane a mere shadow of the North so far as ideologies were

North and South.

concerned. Politics were divorced from the popular currents of national, cultural and religious life. But of late the political leaders have been forced to realise the unreality of their situation and are slowly coming in touch with the age-old national and cultural problems of the South. This has given and is giving an individuality to the South, though, of course the varying degrees of contact with the popular forces has given rise to another Babel here also that threatens for a time at least to set one group against the other.

Having tried in the earlier chapters to wade through the intricacies in the North and find a fundamental unity or guiding light, we shall try to clear the way in the South as well.



The political thought of South India in general and of Tmilnad in particular may be said to be moving in three distinct and parallel courses. Three parallel courses One is the Tamilnad limb of the major political school of All-India politics viz. that of the Unionist represented by the All-India Congress. The other two schools respectively take up the Tamil Nationalist and the Pan-South Indian points of view. As we have remarked above, the Unionist has filled up the whole arena of politics until recently and the Pan-South Indian school confined its activities mainly to the phases of social and religious reform and the cultural awakening of the land. In between these two militant groups, there has always been the literary and linguistic school of thought led by the Tamil scholars and Tamil men of thought and the zealous lovers of the Tamil language and literature, solely putting their shoulder to the pioneering task of resuscitating the flagging energies of the class of the ryots and the tillers of the soil and the student population and building up a cultural renaissance of learning in the land.

The Pan-South Indian school has often made common cause with the Tamil Renaissance and though it did not fully merge itself in it, on account of the difference in the fields of work chosen, it helped its growth and in turn also derived support from it. The Unionist on the other hand long remained indifferent to and unaffected by it and even occasionally went out of his way to slight and belittle it. But after the achievement of Dominion Status and practical, if partial, liberation from the political yoke of the foreigner, the contest of power-politics and of inter-provincial, inter-religious and group jealousies of the rest of India opened his eyes to his own unique nationalist standpoint of view at home. As a result he has taken courage into his own hands and is beginning to think for himself at first hand. This has partially brought him closer to the range of action of his Pan-South Indian rival worker among the people. But as the Pan-South Indian point of view is definitely separatist he could not be easily drawn towards him without violently breaking with his erstwhile brethren of All India, while at the same time as a result of his gradually increasing humiliations in the hands of the All India leader-

New alliances and  
Juxtapositions



ship due to his pliant attitude to its sweet will and pleasure so far, he could not also long afford to remain aloof from the natural forces around him. In this context his mind easily took up the Tamil Renaissance point of view and thus the third school which hitherto has been a cultural one has won the status of a political party rooted in the good old soil of the ancient culture of India in Tamilnad itself. This has brought him along with the Pan-South Indian group into the arena of Tamilnad nationalism definitely and unmistakably. This has also brought him into the common platforms of the country where he, like others, has an opportunity to bring his case into the bar of enlightened Tamil public opinion and to fight it out with his brethern of the other political denominations. One may be sure that he is in the long run destined to make common cause with them.

These three sections of opinion in the South may be said to be vertical in their lines of division; for, their distinctions are mainly due to appeals to varying regional units.

Horizontal and crosswise sections

Hence though they seem to march in parallel columns under seemingly different denominations, they may be said to have a really

fundamental standpoint of view and aim. But arising from and nominally belonging to the All-India limb, the other Leftist or advanced wings like the Socialists, the Communists, Royists or Radical Democrate etc., in so far as they stand for the rights of the poorer or labouring classes, may be said to be sections appealing to groups on the basis of a horizontal division cutting through every other vertical group in India, and often carrying the line of division beyond India and attaining to an international status. Hence, while they are said to be the advanced vanguard generally of the All-India group, they also often make common cause with one or other of the regional groups in cases where they are considered to advocate advanced points of view or when they have some other points of contact in common with them.

Apart from these horizontal and vertical divisions there may be said to be a third kind also cutting through both of these classifications, viz. the Communal groups. The Muslim League is limited in its range of appeal to the Muslims, the Depressed Classes Federation appeals to the Depressed Classes and the Hindu Mahasabbah to an undefined vague class called the Hindus. These parties are



powerful in proportion to the size and importance of the sections they appeal to and also in proportion to their support from these sections. Needless to say, with the exception of the League, the other communal parties have not won their case by winning the support of the majority of the sections they appeal to.

With the exception of the League and the Communist limbs of Tamilnad and the three regional groups, the other parties, communal as well as non-communal, are not prominent in the South and hence we shall confine our attention mainly upon the former two groups, the Regional and the Class groups.

Trend towards  
unity in sight in the  
South

While the unification of India on a broad-based principle through adoption of the only culturally common national language, Tamil, is a distant possibility as yet not even dreamt of by the public or the politician of the day, the unification of all these in Tamilnad itself through the agency of common allegiance and emphasis on Tamil is quite a near possibility. This is partly due to the fact mentioned earlier, that Tamilnad has been naturally and historically a full-blooded nation whose nationality is based upon the language of the land. But it is also due to another fact

scarcely noticed at the present day. - Of all the regional units of the Indian peninsula, Tamilnad alone has imbibed in full the spirit of India's Nationalistic and Renaissance movements. For apart from being a pioneer in the field of the freedom movement along with Bengal and its continuing to be in the vanguard of the Renaissance movement like Bengal or Maharashtra, it has the privilege of uniting both these movements into one and producing a National as well as Renaissance poet in the person of Modern India's national poet, Subramanya Bharati and his illustrious successor the Revolutionary Tamil poet, Bharatidasan.

The three groups above-mentioned are often throwing mud at each other and even among themselves as between sub-groups or individuals. But in spite of this they are drawn together irresistably by the influence of Tamil. This influence is not, and indeed cannot be said to be the influence of a mere language or literature, for in no other region in India has language become the pivot of a national movement as here.



Tamil as mother tongue of the people of Tamilnad and its regional tongue was naturally its first phase that attracted the attention of the Unionist of the old school in the latter half of the thirties when he swept the polls in 1937 against the Justice Party which more or less held the reins of power for a decade. It expressed itself in the form of educational reform—the introduction of the mother tongue medium in the land. It seems to have been planned during the Advisors' Regime itself but it was left to be brought into effect in Madras by the 1st Congress Ministry (i.e. C.R's Ministry). Naturally enough it found support from all the groups despite political animosities in other spheres. But this wholesome spirit was to some extent vitiated by the hurried introduction of the compulsory scheme of Hindi. As it was an unnatural and anti-national thing to introduce it earlier in the South than its national home in the North itself, it of course met with an almost national opposition in the south. It had to be let down during the following regimes, though the mother tongue medium continued unabated in all regimes. But Congress or no Congress, the mother tongue medium could not fully succeed for the

Tamilnad and  
Unionist--mother  
tongue aspect

reason that it was not taken up in earnest in the spirit of either a nationalist or an educationist but only as a matter of political expediency. It was further not a local aspect of reform as it had a wider All-India application embracing all the mother tongues. It is true that Bengal and other regions had given lead to it but as in many other phenomena there was neither a clear-sighted goal nor an All India plan or programme nor even an all-provincial scheme about it.

The difficulties in the way of the effectiveness of the mother tongue medium are the following:

(1) The confusion between mother tongue and regional tongue affects the new reform for as the national language of a region is not in fact the mother tongue as *mother tongue* but the mother tongue in its regional aspect, the real medium ought to be that of the regional language rather than that of the mother tongue. Needless to say this is possible only after the separation of the linguistic provinces and after the regional tongues gain the status of the state language of the region. This is not

Drawbacks of the  
reform of mother  
tongue medium



a matter achieved even today (1948) after the lapse of a full decade from the date of the promulgation of the mother tongue medium.

(2) A medium of instruction is next to useless if that medium is not the language of the state and of culture in the region. So long as the prize of competition goes to English or any other language, the mother tongue medium must perforce be ineffective in the extreme. It is matter of common knowledge that those very people who are vociferous in the support of the mother tongue medium are often among those who on some excuse or other prefer to get their children admitted in the foreign tongue medium. This is not, as is often complained, their fault but that of the half-hearted measures of the state.

In border areas between linguistic regions where there are people of varying regional languages and in cosmopolitan cities like Madras, Bombay, etc. which happen to be administrative centres of multi-lingual provinces, the ambiguous position of the regional tongue makes the excuse for the foreign tongue medium plausible.

(3) Where the teaching staff, the class of authors and the whole educational system

are based upon foreign tongue, introduction of the so-called mother tongue medium is little more than a farce and an eyewash. There is no provision in the system (a) for any gradual change in the raising of the status of the teacher of the regional tongue in the long run to the top ranks in administration and in emoluments; (b) for insistence on regional tongue qualification as the basis of the educational equipment for all teachers of subjects, languages, etc., (c) for insistence on regional tongue qualification for the authors of the books and lastly; (d) for making of regional tongue the basis of qualification for the services.

These palpable shortcomings of the scheme are due to the fact that the mother tongues in India with the exception of Tamil do not come up to or are not regarded as coming up to the status of national languages. Whatever be the All India aspect of language, there is no reason why the regional tongues should not be immediately given the first place in the educational system and in the administrative machinery of the region itself. If there is any explanation at all for this, it is the unwillingness of the various kinds of vested interests, official as well



as educational. Patriotism and nationalism, one would suppose, have not permeated the classes enough so as to get over these sectional interests.

So far as Tamil is concerned, the Unionist of the old order who is of course gradually losing hold of public support in Tamilnad confines his vision to the mother tongue aspect only and the vision is often blurred even in this aspect, for he cannot bring himself to think that Tamil has a status even as an equal to the other tongues. The Unionist of the new order: the national aspect

The Unionist of the new order and the Tamil Nationalist group who at present have merged in one, insist upon the fully national aspect of Tamil at least so far as the region is concerned, though they at present do not, and possibly cannot carry this principle to its logical conclusion in arena All India. The Pan-South Indian group represented by the Dravidar Kazhagam emphasises a third aspect, the super-national or race or cultural aspect of Tamil. Here also the logical extension of the case either into All India arena or to the common language problem is not being taken up. One can understand their diffidence, as it is born out of a sense of fairness to

their brethern outside the region and of a true spirit of democracy that stops within their real bounds of right and does not infringe on those of others, however kindred in race or culture they be.

So long as the nationalities of the other regional areas of India—South India as well as North India—remain averse

Possibilities of a common platform to the national or regional aspect as well as the super national or common aspect of the language problem, the All India aspect as well as the Pan-South Indian aspect can only be distant objects of propaganda. They are goals to be kept in view and not immediate steps in the programme. So far as the first step in the direction of practical politics is concerned, there is at present no reason why the three groups should not co-operate wholeheartedly at least in Tamilnad. What stands or may stand in the way is only a question of power politics and clash of leaderships or group interests. If the parties really rise above party standpoints and come up to the national level, a working basis of union is not impossible.

Union of nationalistic or patriotic parties in the cause of a nation, however, is



possible only where each party realises the strength and justice of the opponents and those of their own and is prepared to follow a policy of adjustment and give-and-take. We shall see what potentialities for adjustment are available in the different points of view.

The Pan-South Indian interests have a comprehensive, sweeping and radical programme of reform of an extremely revolutionary character. This easily makes it occupy the front rank wherever revolutionary changes are in the air, though it has also on the other side created a strong all-round reaction in all vested interests and their elaborate systems of defences. This reaction puts the moderates or liberal elements in the nationality in an awkward position. While they are not daring enough to join the storm-troopers in the vanguard, (the extreme reformists of the Dravidar Kazhagam) they find it harder also to withstand the seemingly all-pervasive forces of reactionism. But in belittling the influence of the vanguard they count too much on appearances and propaganda, meant to camouflage the failing strength of an essentially weakening, if still strong force.

Pan-South Indian  
group: fear of  
moderates

Some moderates or liberals have the opposite kind of fear viz. that the storm will not stop with destroying the foe but may itself sit on the saddle permanently. For instance, the religious devotees who really detest the false leadership in religion as sincerely as the storm-group think that the forces unleashed against the old order may sweep off all that is good in the same. This fear again is not really warranted by facts or events. The storm-groups are not growing more and more vehement with their success, but are visibly toning down as they approach their goal. This readiness to make common cause with their erstwhile opponents proves their bona fides. There is no reason therefore to fear that the medicine will long outlive the disease.

Further the very storm-groupers, the Pan-South Indian Dravidar Khazhagam group are destined to be the meeting ground of the other two groups in the long run. For while all other parties in the South as well as in the North can be classified as Regional, Class-based or Communal, this group happens to answer to all these classifications. They are regional as they make a special appeal to the whole of South Indian public, speaking

Potentialities of  
unity in the Pan-  
South Indian case



the group of Dravidian languages. They are class-based as they stand for the rights of the down-trodden labouring classes and those exploited economically, socially, in the name of religion or even on the basis of culture, education or art. Lastly, though they are not communal in the sense that they are appealing to a minority community they can be called communal because even in their appeal to the masses they are found to exclude the infinitesimally small group of vested interests and appeal to the large group of the masses who in Tamilnad happen to be misnamed a community. Hence in this land ripped asunder by regional, communal and class interests, their appeal to the downtrodden in all these aspects is bound to unite all the groups in the long run.

If comprehensiveness is the strength of this group, an easy comprehensibility, a pliancy of attitude and a concentration on the next immediate step needed for the region makes the Tamil Nationalistic group a common platform in the near future. It has also had the good fortune of having a double birth, one earlier outside the All-India political movement as a purely literary and

Potentialities of  
Tamil Nationalists'  
school

cultural reform and another later from within as well as out of it. This has been transforming the three points of view of old into two viz. the Pan-South Indian and the Tamil groups and if the two can concentrate on the next step on a common accepted basis with due adjustments, Tamilnad at least would see the light of an unforeseen national unity in India.

We give here below an imaginary pattern of such an adjusted common point of view for all the groups in Tamilnad :

(1) The regional mother-tongue of every region (Tamil for Tamilnad) shall be the regional national language or state language of the region.

Suggested programme for unity      pro-

(2) The regional tongue shall form the basic subject of education and the only medium of instruction in all the educational institutions of the region. The non-regional languages shall be given protection and freedom of development but will not claim or obtain any concession other than those not clashing with the rightful place of the national language of the region in education or administration.



(3) While caste and communal distinctions will not be recognised, yet so long as inequalities, injustices and iniquities based on them continue, communal representation for each and all of the individual communities or even sub-communal groups shall be accepted as the policy of the state. This system of representation shall also be based on a gradated list of communities arranged in inverse order of the advantages enjoyed by the communities concerned so far in the frame work of caste system.

While members of any community would have the option to choose their system of electorate or representation, none shall deny the same right to any other community.

4. The sovereignty of Tamilnad shall be recognised by all groups. The right of the Pan-South Indian group or the All India Union to form federal unions of South India or of India should follow the recognition of the sovereignty of Tamilnad and other similar regional states and must be based upon those regions. Just as recognition of the regional units should precede regional group units like Dravidanadu, the group units should be

given precedence over the wider All-India Union. In other words all powers of sovereignty should be based upon those of the regional state and can be exercised by the group or All-India Union only on the basis of delegation and continued consent of these states or regional units.

(5) The groups and states shall have the option to secede from or accede to the Union or the Group as the case may be.

(6) English shall not be recognised as the state language, national language or even common language of the Groups or of the All-India Union, but its functions as cultural common language shall continue on a temporary basis so long as an indigenous common national i.e. mother tongue of India chosen by common consent freely expressed by all regions is not forthcoming.

(7) Within the region a fully national socialist democratic state with nationalisation of all basic industries shall be established.

(8) The distinction between labour and capital shall be minimised if not wholly got over by recognising that labour under certain conditions is also capital and that capital is only partially the property of the capitalist.



To be more explicit, labour should be given the right of claiming a third of the net dividend or profit; each labourer entitled to a portion of the labour dividend in proportion to his pay after the completing of a minimum period of service; and capital should be considered as a category apart from and independent of the capitalist in his personal capacity after the expiry of a similar minimum period from the establishment of the concern.

A programme like this accepted in Tamilnad to begin with shall indeed form the golden nucleus round which an All-India super-nationality may be built in the long run.

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## X THE CASE OF THE SEPARATISTS

There is something highly paradoxical in the current relations between the Unionists and the Separatists in India.

The Unionist is apparently highly popular among the masses and the Indian press is almost solidly behind him. The vested interests are practically always with the Unionists. With all these advantages, the wonder is not that the Unionists win, but that they have to fight at all to win. The wonder is all the greater when, as now, (in the separation of India into two Domi-

The Paradox of  
Indian Politics

nions) we see the Unionists forced to withdraw and yield up ground to their Separatist opponents. Wherefrom comes this unseen hand that turns weakness itself into a strength and gives a minority the force to dictate terms to a huge majority ?

The fact is the Unionist is often in the region of vague idealism and as he often loses grip of the realities of national life and its problems, he falls an easy prey to the vested interests who, with the Unionist's own slogans on their lips and his own idealisms to cloak their questionable conduct, easily take up the reins of leadership and become leader-makers and holders of destiny. In making his high-minded crusade against the Separatists, the poor Unionist enthusiast is unaware of the fact that he is but an unfortunate tool in the hands of the evil forces of the land against his own patriotic brethern who fight with less glittering ideals but with a greater grasp of the realities of the problems of life. This also accounts for two of the puzzling problems of Indian political life today ; one the occasional and in the long run, the inevitable victory of the Separatist elements ; the other the enormous strength of the Unionist section. The former is due neither to ideologies



nor to the organisation of parties nor even to the skilled leadership but to the natural, almost national undercurrent of forces whose power, even if unorganised, is elemental. The latter is due to the combined forces of glittering ideologies and the enormous power and organisation that the vested interests can always bring to bear on anything that they view as their life-and-death struggle.

The people of India, the unlearned mob no less than the learned, are so easily moved to enthusiasm through ideals that they do not see the hand The rift in the late of the Unionist behind the screen. To them all that is Unionist is gold and all that is Separatist is clay. It is no wonder that faced with such a blind unthinking rejection of their point of view, the Separatist forces in the land, however well-meaning or logical or clearly expressive their case is, are driven to desperation and consequently, Separatism is born out of the very sense of frustration prevalent in the land. The great leaders of the Unionist group despite their consummate acumen, ability and backing, are found to fail in the long run mainly because they have

not reckoned, and often are not prepared to reckon with these elemental forces behind their opponents.

The case of the Separatist can neither be understood rightly by the vituperations of his opponents nor perhaps even by his special pleadings in his own behalf. For the former is intended to paint him black and the latter is put up as a smoke-screen against the Unionist vested interests, and not as explanation to the friendly and idealist brethern of the Unionist group. If the idealists or patriots on either side wish to understand each other's point of view in order to find common grounds of service to the nation, they must study each other through the historical and psychological background. It is these points of view that we here try to keep before them on behalf of the Separatist.

The so-called Separatists came out as fullblooded Separatists only recently and are almost always only the old idealists of the Unionist group disillusioned and dissatisfied with the part they have played in that group. They have been forced to adopt a Separatist mentality as they found by bitter experience



that the Unionist ideology proves a too pliable instrument in the hands of the vested interests.

The Separatists are vaguely conscious of the weakness of the Unionist camp in easily falling a prey to the vested interests and the reactionaries, but have not correctly assessed the ideological origin of the weakness. The word union properly understood connotes unity of parts of an organic whole, with equal opportunities of growth and sustenance to every part. In other words, unity without equality is no true unity at all. The vested interests within the Unionist camp find it easy to abuse the Unionist ideology by stressing on unity at the cost of equality within that unity. The advanced democratic elements of the Unionist fold rightly lay emphasis on *unity with equality* and are prepared to fight on that score. But here too the all-powerful vested interests can find a loophole to inveigle their self-interest into it. A theoretical equality of opportunity may camouflage the existing inequalities due to the continued exploitation, conscious or unconscious, of the age-long iniquities. The Muslim in many regions of North India is heir not only to the religion of Islam

Unity versus equality

but also unfortunately to the general backwardness of the classes of people from whom he got derived or was converted. The Depressed Classes suffer from a still greater inherent inferiority by nature of the age-long organised oppression against them. Apart from these class or caste inequalities there are regional inequalities as well. Where the Unionist ideology either consciously or unconsciously sets its face against a reconstruction and reconsolidation of society and nationality on a more equitable basis, the idealist has perforce to turn Separatist. This, rather than any love of separation in the abstract is the psychology behind the Separatist.

Tamil and Dravidian culture happen to symbolise the general backward areas as well as the specially backward classes and hence, the Tamil Nationalist movement and the Dravidian or Pan-South Indian movement voice forth an apparently Separatist ideology but in reality they represent the Radical-Nationalist point of view in India. If the advanced groups of South India (the Socialists, Communists) have not made common cause

Radical -- Nationalist and Radical-Democratic aspects combined in the South



with these groups as yet, it is due only to the fact that these groups are regional in their initial approach.

North India happens to be far off from the home of the Radical Nationalist of the South and hence it is not aware of the mother tongue-based Radical Nationalism. The backward areas in the north are too much in the grip of some kind or other of alien domination and the higher classes all over make common cause with their brethern of the forward regions. Hence the Radical Nationalist elements of various regions, especially in the north, do not find it easy at present to have either a regional or a national basis for the expression of their case. So their point of view becomes that of the Radical Democrat rather than that of the Radical Nationalist. This is the reason why in the north all advanced groups are class-conscious and not regionally organised.

There are two groups in the north however who on account of their numerical strength are able to stand as communal groups on their own merits viz. the Depressed Classes and the Muslims. Either or both of them, if they had taken up a national stand,

The Separatist of  
the North

could have made common cause with the Tamil Nationalist or Dravidian Nationalist on an All-India basis; but as such a comradeship has not been accomplished, they could not logically become an All-Indian group. They however laid claim to regional homes where they are in a majority and demanded regional separation. The Muslim case has already won its point because of the greater solidarity of support the Muslims could gain on the score of religion. The Depressed Classes could gain an equal solidarity only on racial grounds but immediate cultural environments in the North have not favoured such a consummation as yet.

We can thus see that the Separatists' case is not as it appears on the face, merely a separation for the sake of separation. They aim at gaining equality for one or more of the homogeneous backward sections, communal or regional, as a necessary step towards any future real unification of All India of a complex or super-national type. If this stress on equality and unity is appreciated, the really patriotic elements of the Unionist group would find no difficulty in crossing the apparent barrier of ideology and uniting or

Conclusion : Union  
of all Unionist and  
Separatist elements



making common cause with them. If the Separatist movements of the south are understood in the right spirit, it will indeed be possible to unite all Separatists as well as all Unionists of the North as of the South under one universal banner of radical or super-nationalistic federation, with the mother-tongue as the national basis and with Tamil as the cultural or super-national link on, if possible, a purely non-political basis.

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## XI IN CONCLUSION

After wending our way into the various aspects of the language problem and its ramifications into political, religious or social phases of life, we cannot conclude better than by collecting in this chapter the various categorical as well as '*a priori*' conclusions arrived at as a result of our arguments.

Restatement of points covered in brief: The language problem

(1) India is not a unitary type of nation and hence cannot have either a unitary state or a unitary national language. The really basic nationalities are the linguistic regions and the real national languages are the regional languages. No All India state can have a really permanent or sovereign status

of a democratic or national character if it is not based on and does not derive its power from the freely expressed will and consent of the regional states. In the same manner no language can really attain to the status of a common language or *lingua franca* without the free will expressed in a representative manner by one and all of the regional states concerned.

(2) English can continue and must continue as the common language of India as well as those of the groups of regions, if such are preferred by the states concerned, until, and only until, an indigenous mother-tongue is unanimously accepted to take its place. It shall however be understood that English so long as it is allowed to accupy such a place, shall do so not in the old status of a state language imposed from above or even as a freely chosen common language but just in the capacity of a temporarily chosen *lingua franca* of convenience that shall be disused as early as possible on the choice of a more suitable substitute. In the case of continued stalemate in the field of the All Indian language problem, English shall be given up and the mother tongues shall take its place collectively, all languages being



given equal status. A well-equipped bureau of translation will help common contact; and a cultural common national language for India, without any political status and serving to conduce best to regional as well as All India interests, can or may be adopted for cultural contacts and as common base of translation only. Tamil in our opinion would admirably fill up the role of such a language of contact.

(3) Whatever be the All India choice in the All India aspect, the national aspect of regional languages in the administration and education of regions must not be tampered with either by such common language or by English, so long as the same continues in that capacity.

(4) The choice of Tamil as the common national language or common cultural language is based on the following principles.

(a) Tamil is the only language having a rich and varied literature (i) of more than two thousand years standing (ii) reaching back at least a thousand years beyond that of the oldest of the other mother tongue literatures and a full four or five centuries or more beyond that of Sanskrit literature

The case for Tamil

proper, (iii) catering to all the religions of India, ancient and modern, (iv) possessing the greater part or almost the whole of the religious literature of the indigenous popular religions of the land, (v) having the good fortune of being the only original and secular literature of India that is of inestimable use to the historian of ancient India, (vi) possessing the matchless World Bible, the Thirukkural, that appeals equally to all religions sections and groups in India, ancient and modern, and last but not least, (vii) blessed with the only national renaissance poets of Modern India like Bharathi, Ramalinga Adigal and Bharatidasan.

(b) Tamil is the only language of India (i) capable of standing on its own legs without the aid of Sanskrit and (ii) spoken in a widely scattered area in almost every continent of the world among a decidedly major portion of the over-seas Indians and thus having the potentialities of the only international Indian language.

(c) Tamil is the language associated with the basic racial group of India, the Dravidian, and connected with the prehistoric culture of India as represented by the Indus civilization of the second and third millennia B. C.



The above statement of our case has the merit or demerit of being a lone voice among the Babel of Voices in India, but its very freshness is calculated to place it above every other voice that arises from a definite party or group interest in the land. Further it is based upon presentation of facts that are known but not brought together or not emphasised or noticed. The general ignorance as well as indifference to everything South Indian among the Indian populace and the race-complex that is a general feature throughout India has helped to put these into the shade if not to bury them.

It remains for us before we close this booklet briefly to consider the statements on the language problem made recently in so far as they have a bearing on our presentation.

Mahatma Gandhi\* in one of his post-prayer speeches (as reported in the press on July 16, 1947—referring to Dravida-  
stan and condemning outright  
the case for the same, conde-  
scended to express a few words about the  
language problem in general and about the

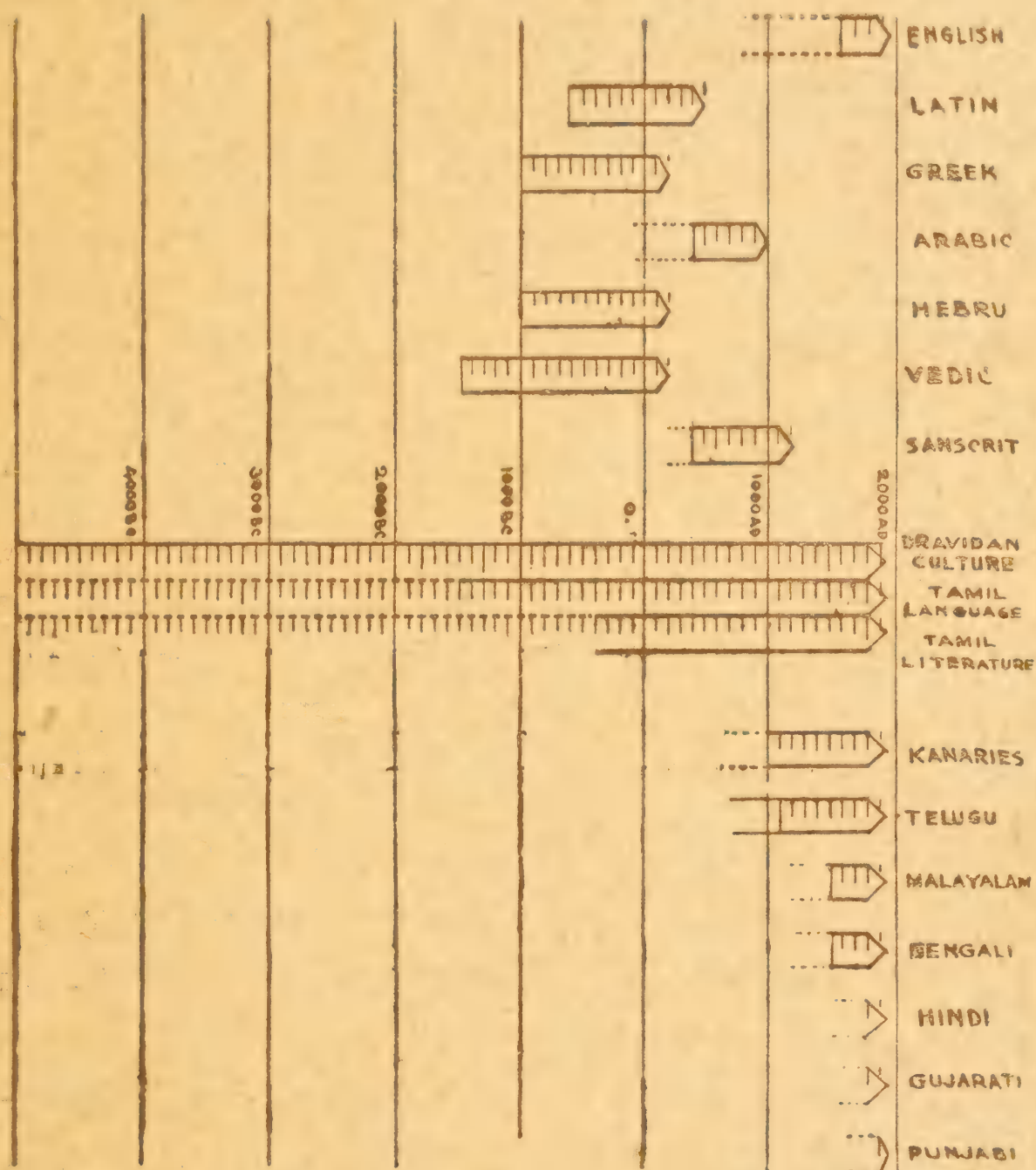
Mahatma Gandhi  
on Tamil and South  
India

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\* Since writing these, this great leader of our unfortunate country has met his end at the hands of the very vested interest he unwittingly strengthened by his unrealistic idealism.

Dravidian languages in particular. In the course of his speech he asked: "Are not these languages (the Dravidian languages: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada) rich because they have drawn largely upon Sanskrit for their richness?" Coming as the statement does from so eminent a figure of All India status and international fame as the Mahatma, it is likely to throw a screen over the problem, especially as it voices forth the floating prejudices at large and the racial and religious complexes of the land. Mahatma Gandhi here refers to the richness but does not refer to the richness as well as the antiquity of these languages though he must have been aware of both. He seems also to state as a wellknown fact an assumption that would scarcely stand the test of facts. If the Dravidian literatures are really rich because they have drawn largely upon Sanskrit for their richness, the languages nearer to the centre of Sanskrit culture and deriving more from it should be richer as well as earlier in this literary development. But the case is everywhere just the reverse of this. The accompanying figure would illustrate this.





The representations of comparative antiquity in the figure would equally prove as comparison of the richness of the literatures or their originality as well.

Apart from language, Mahatma Gandhi has a few words on the race problem also. He says that it is a myth to consider that those living in the South of the Vindhya are

Non-Aryans and those in the north, Aryans. "Whatever they might have been at one time, they are so intermixed that they are one people from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, notwithstanding that India is cut into two". This is neither a statement of the basic truth nor is truth as at present understood. Nobody denies racial intermixture in India. All that is said is that the languages of North India are predominantly Aryan (as the word Aryan is understood now-a-days) and that those of the south predominantly Dravidian. No one will deny this. If, as we have tried to show, the word Aryan in connection with North India is really used for the Indo-Aryan or Dravidio-Aryan composite group, it could of course mean that there is a basic unity in India though not uniformity: but then it would also mean that the basic unity would be Dravidian and therefore directly opposed to the present false nationalism of India based on the assumption that the basic culture is Aryan. This is untrue of India generally, but utterly false in its application to South India. If North Indians stick to their Aryan theory, as they seem to do, there is no other way open to the South but to break with them in the long run. Even if



the rest of South India hesitate to break the Aryan tie, Tamilnad will have to do so all the sooner for it. Of course we hope for the better, believing that the Aryanised brethern of the North would realise the falsity of their position early enough.

Another North Indian leader, Dr. Kailashnath Katju, at present Governor of Orissa, though of an eminence far less than that of the Ma- Dr. Katju's position hatma, must be noticed here partly because he holds an important position and partly because he puts forward a case that has its vibrations in many a breast whose silent sympathies would proclaim themselves loudly if the merits of the case were even a little more worthy of the advocacy. He talks on behalf of Sanskrit as against Hindi and we quote some of his words that have a bearing upon the South and on Tamil. He says: "Sanskrit is the mother of all those 'provincial' languages in India which do not derive their inspiration from Arabia and Persia." It is hard for any single sentence spoken in an assembly of the leaders of education in the land\*, to match this in giving

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\* The speech was made in an All India Universities' Conference.

an utterly false picture of the question. For one thing, there are no 'languages' deriving inspiration from Arabia or Persia but only one 'language' namely Urdu, and even that is just the Muslim version of Hindi and hence having the same parentage as Hindi. For the rest it would appear that in the mental vision of Dr. Katju and of men of his way of thinking Tamil and the languages of the south are probably not to be counted as languages of their India! For they are entirely and certainly not derived from Mother Sanskrit. Every schoolboy knows that they are called Dravidian languages. Even if Dr. Katju could belittle history, and sciences like philology, ethnology &c, he could and should have recognised the distinctive application of the word Dravida for the Tamil language in Sanskrit usage and of the words Prakrit, Desi and Paisachi to distinguish between the Aryan-based speech of the unlettered, the speech of the nationals and lastly of the anti-Sanskritic groups of the border-lands—all these three divisions applying to North India itself.

The most original point in Dr. Katju's plea for Sanskrit is of course his statement that it would avoid provincial jealousies. He is either



thinking of the religious feelings created by Hindi or the provincial jealousies that may arise in case the next best North Indian regional language, Bengali, is to be brought up to the forefront of the language controversy. He however conveniently forgets the regional, racial, religious as well as provincial opposition coming from the South which is almost of a national character. His statement that "all our sacred books in law and religion..... are in Sanskrit," equally go against facts obtaining in Tamilnad. We have shown elsewhere that the really typical Hindu or Indian religious texts are in Tamil mainly and as for non-Hindu religions as well as for the non-religious biassed public, Tamil is the only literature worth the study. As for law, Sanskrit law would only help to take back India to a stage of barbarity never reached in India at even its worst mediaeval night, as the Sanskrit law of the Smritis was never before the advent of the British rule anything more than the expression of the greedy aspirations of the priestly classes.

As for art, science etc., Sanskrit texts are at present mainly the only available texts in North India because the indigeneous languages were suppressed in literary output by the

false nationalism of mediaeval Sanskrit. It would be a bad augury for modern India that her nationalism should repeat the blunders of mediaeval India by bringing back Sanskrit.

Despite the above criticisms, we do grant that the advocacy of Sanskrit has one merit in it above that of Hindi in that it has a comparatively more ancient literature befitting an ancient land like India. But it may be noticed, the argument holds good all the more and doubly so in the case of Tamil which is a living language, and has a literature better and more ancient than that of Sanskrit.

Another great leader, this time an educationist, in the person of Dr. Hari Singh Gour, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Saugar, U.P. has taken up the advocacy of

Dr. Hari Singh  
Gour's advocacy of  
English

English. Had it not been that it is a foreign language, out of sympathy with Indian linguistic types and India's sense of self-respect, one would say English was more worthy of being or continuing as the common language of India. The case is indeed ably argued with all the points for and against; and barring the case for Tamil which as yet, is a case unconsidered, it would find as it indeed has found, the widest possible



degree of support despite its drawbacks. Educationists would in particular welcome the point of view inasmuch as it helps to avoid the bad economy in education through having to burden the Indian boy with more than one language in addition to his regional tongue. But as we have said elsewhere, the case of the mother tongues would have to suffer if English were allowed to continue its tyranny over the national life of the regions. Hence either a translation bureau or a cultural common language like Tamil would be a better suggestion in the sphere of the All India language problem.

The statement on language problem by Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Education Minister of the Government of India and ex-President of the Congress is more comprehensive in its view and clarifying in content than any that has been put forth, short of the case for Tamil. He recognises that English cannot continue for ever as the common language but concedes that English will have an important role to play for long; and will continue to have an important place even after the choice of a national (of course meaning common) language. He also explicitly states that the

Moulana Azad's  
'Golden Mean'

mother tongues are to be the languages of administration as well as of education in the linguistic regions

Barring the want of consideration of the case for Tamil (which is as yet unvoiced) and the special pleading, although apologetically, made (unavoidable in his case as he is prominent in the Congress Unionist circles) for Hindi, his statement may almost be said to be a well-argued case for super-nationalism.

Apart from our fresh consideration of the case for Tamil, as we have ourselves granted the special merits of English, Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi in the order in which we name them here, a word about the first would here be timely.

F Case for English  
over-stated

The literature of a language is untranslatable but not its science. Further science is not the privilege of any one nation or race or region. The value of English for science is not on account of its being the language of science but as the one accessible language for science in the greater part of India and the East, and as one bearing the spirit of science to us. This spirit has permeated all the languages of India today due to the contact with English and may early become their



own spirit as well. Translation from English and indigenous advance of science will soon bring up every language of India to the level of English. This is not impossible or even improbable, for English itself has been till recently at least recognised to be far behind German in this respect. Further Russian language has quite recently taken up the challenge of the Pure West in this respect quite successfully.

Tamil like every other language has to absorb this spirit of the West in the sphere of science. But apart from technical aspects, the general spirit of scientific regard for truth and historicity with a sense of realism pervades early classical Tamil literature which stands in strong contrast to all the Indian languages including Sanskrit. Further Tamil has a fertility of vocabulary and composition, especially embedded in its early literature that are no whit inferior to Sanskrit or any other language. The writer as a Tamilian and a student of literature is decidedly of the opinion that if the Tamils were only left unfettered by the Sanskritist outside as well as inside Tamilnad, Tamil can set an example not only to the languages of India but to Sanskrit and to the languages of the world.

Spirit of Science in  
Tamil Universal  
Literature

The fact that Tamil nationalists aim at a pure unadulterated language (even as Sanskritists think of writing a pure unadulterated style in their language i.e. Sanskrit even though it happens to be a dead language) would set an example to all the languages of India and particularly those of South India, in developing their own native resources which alone will enable their natural genius to grow on the fertile soil of the land.

It is a general fact that truth and nature would win in the long run, recognised or unrecognised. Whatever be the final decision of the national groups in India, India cannot ignore the fundamental truths of history or culture, especially as the unity that she or at least many of her leaders value more than even her freedom is indissolubly connected with that truth. The ignoring of this wilfully or otherwise will, it has to be warned, lead to the severance of the bond of South and North in the long run even more certainly than the severance of the Eastern and Western extremities of India from the Central Indian region. Let us hope that such a division, even if it is to be for a time, will not be hastened and rendered irrevocable by a false move in the language problem, and that, instead, the division in the north already effected will itself be cemented again by a more enlightened, well-considered and well-planned programme in the linguistic arena.



## ERRATA

(Pages of Preface in Roman Number)

Page	Lines	Text	Correction
iii	13	1980	1978
„	3 rd from bottom	as under	asunder
xiii	23	reaged	raged
xiv	14	eve now	even now
xxii	19	very idea	the very idea
xxviii	20	adoration to then	adoration to the
„	2 from bottom	light and human	light and w o r s h i p human
xxx	16	which had been	the land had been
xxxi	5 from bot.	now s u n g	now s u n k
10	12	It need not be hardly	It need hard- ly be
21	3 from bot.	oommon	common
38	20	1635	1935
40	15	latters	latter
„	22	and of its	and its
43	10	lieu Urdu	like Urdu
46	4 from bot.	the 16th	the 10th
52	4	or facts	or facets
55	19	literatures	literature
65	Foot note	see next chapter	see chapter viii

Page	Lines	Text	Correction
73	7	this new literary birth	their ne litera birth
78	15	Tamilnad above and	Tamilna above,
.,	16	Strange significant	Strange an significan
85	20	this Telugu Tamils	These Telu Tamils
83	Footnote 2 from bot.	served	saved
94	12	daities	deities
98	Foot note 5 from bot.	U.P.	C.P. & U.P
112	Chapter Heading	from a Linguistic	from Ling stic.
120	14	canntoted	connoted
122	4	and from	and form.
141	9 from bot.	in arena All India	in the All India are

*Andy*  
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